

THE LAST SUPERPOWER SUMMITS



Gorbachev, Reagan, and Bush



Conversations that Ended the Cold War

By Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton

A National Security Archive Cold War Reader

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The Last Superpower Summits

GORBACHEV, REAGAN, AND BUSH

CONVERSATIONS THAT ENDED THE COLD WAR

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THE COLD WAR

SVETLANA SAVRANSKAYA and THOMAS BLANTON

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book is the culmination of 20 years of research that started in the early 1990s when the Gorbachev Foundation published the Russian-language transcripts of the Reykjavik and Malta summits with Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, respectively. It took years (in the case of Reagan) and decades (in the case of Bush) to get the American transcripts declassified, but along the way, the authors gathered thousands and thousands of pages of the preparatory talks on both sides, the internal policy debates, the recommendations to their bosses by key players ranging from the CIA to the Soviet military-industrial commission, the mid-stream all-nighters by subordinates during the summits, the after-action reports both official and unofficial (as in diaries), and the makings of a truly interactive documentary history of these extraordinary conversations that ended the Cold War.

We call this book “the last superpower summits” not only because there is only one superpower today, but also because it seems to us that the high level and scope of the dialogue between these world leaders was unprecedented and appears to be largely missing in today’s world. Reading the transcripts, the memcons, the telcons, the letters, one almost gets nostalgic for the quality of the conversation, which briefly reached the level of global partnership on settling regional issues, and reflected a remarkable degree of understanding of mutual interests. There were certainly elements of manipulation, going both ways, especially around the unification of Germany in NATO and the first Gulf War, that left resentments which plague international relations even today. But the meeting of the minds fairly leaps from the pages of these extraordinary documents, which more than most, “speak for themselves,” for they are mostly the spoken word.

This book is the story of an extended conversation made possible by the change of leadership on the Soviet side in 1985, and the eagerness on both sides to engage (and be seen to engage!). The documents show significant differences between the two American administrations in their connections with Gorbachev, and much more continuity on the Soviet side.

We conclude in this book that the summit conversations drove a process of learning on both sides. Early on, Geneva 1985 and Reykjavik 1986 reduced Moscow’s sense of threat and unleashed Reagan’s inner abolitionist. Later on, Malta 1989 and Washington 1990 helped dampen any superpower sparks that might have flown in a time of revolutionary change in Europe, set off by Gorbachev and by Eastern Europeans (Solidarity, dissidents, reform Communists, and emigrants, in pretty much that order). And at the very end (almost too late) the summits and their “arms race in reverse” actually dramatically reduced the nuclear

threat with the Bush administration's September 1991 unilateral tactical nuclear withdrawals that were rapidly matched by Gorbachev—and thank goodness. (This underappreciated success story will be the center of our next book—on the Nunn-Lugar program that helped denuclearize the former Soviet Union in the 1990s.)

The summit talks between Gorbachev and Reagan, and later with Bush, covered the world in a way that is impossible to imagine today, certainly not between the United States and Russia, and not even with the NATO allies or others who are nowhere close to equals. Here in the last superpower summits the caliber of conversation is striking, even if one superpower was a declining equal. The documents feature no small irony in that the core Bush administration advisers in 1989 such as Brent Scowcroft and Robert Gates did not actually think the Soviet Union was declining, and at least at first saw Gorbachev as simply the new Brezhnev, just better at PR.

We documented that Bush attitude, the resulting Gorbachev frustration, and the revolutionary events of 1989 in our previous book, *“Masterpieces of History”: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*. There we also published for the first time in English the Soviet transcripts of the Malta summit; so here, we use the American memoranda of conversation instead (they are almost completely congruent, and the few differences we highlight in our headnotes). The serious researcher will read the two books together, because we did not repeat those documents here, even when they were most profoundly on point. Similarly, a serious reader will consult the National Security Archive's online series of annual postings, translated by Anna Melyakova and edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, of the invaluable diary of Anatoly Chernyaev—so often an eyewitness to these summits.

Both *Summits* and *Masterpieces* are tips of the iceberg when it comes to the primary sources that the Archive has obtained on the end of the Cold War. The authors have published since 2005 (the 20th anniversary of the Geneva summit) a series of online briefing books documenting each of the summits, and our hundreds of Freedom of Information Act requests and Mandatory Declassification Review requests over these years have pried loose from government vaults dozens of linear feet of related primary materials.

The real problem of this book is the embarrassment of riches. We built this manuscript over five years to a size that far exceeded the reality check that constrained our publishers. At one point, our manuscript pages mounted over the 3,000 mark, and the last few months before sending the manuscript off have been death by a thousand cuts. We groaned every time we eliminated yet another favorite document, so we owe the reader an explanation of what we cut and what we kept, and why.

Mainly, we privileged the actual words that Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush said to each other. This volume contains the American or the Russian version of almost every word they said at the summits, at least as far as the interpreters and the note takers managed to capture them. Going through these conversations

makes the reader a fly on the wall, listening in at lakeside Geneva, or beside the bay in Reykjavik, or on the cruise ship at Malta, inside Top Secret discussions whose transcripts resided in locked safes until the Freedom of Information Act (on the American side) and the Gorbachev Foundation (on the Russian side) released them from bondage.

The reader will also find here copious excerpts from the transcripts of the foreign ministers—George Shultz, Eduard Shevardnadze, James Baker, and Alexander Bessmertnykh—especially when they go face to face with the president or the general secretary. These talks often reached levels of candor that even the summits would envy, and certainly shaped every summit. Also here are extracts from the contemporaneous records written by close observers of the summits, especially Gorbachev’s foreign policy adviser Anatoly Chernyaev, but also from President Reagan’s and from President Bush’s diaries, which we quote frequently in the essays that introduce each summit.

What is missing here for the most part are the intelligence briefings and the policy documents that the two governments generated around the summits, and that so informed both leaders. On the U.S. side, for example, the national security decision directives that relate to the summits are widely available, including in the Digital National Security Archive published by ProQuest, so even though President Reagan (for one) occasionally read them out loud at a summit, this volume leaves them out except in his words. Similarly, the formal Politburo protocols are also useful, but their language is far more stilted than Gorbachev’s conversation ever was, so we have favored the latter. Likewise, even though we obtained hundreds of pages of talking points and speech drafts on both sides, we cut them in favor of the actual words spoken.

In our headnotes and particularly the essays introducing each of the summits, we have made our biases and our analyses plain. We also give the reader the documents on which we are basing those conclusions. Judge for yourself. We come away from the documents with strong feelings about missed opportunities, about blindness on both sides, about the ways the world would be a safer place today had the summits included more empathy. Yet we also marvel at the ways the summits actually talked the Cold War to an end.

We owe extraordinary debts to so many others for the making of this book. First of all, we thank Anatoly Chernyaev and the Gorbachev Foundation, whose early publication of summits transcripts dating back to 1993 has set a standard for foreign policy openness that all governments should emulate. Anatoly Sergeyevich subsequently played a key role in the systematic publication of the Foundation’s records, not only memcons but Politburo protocols and Central Committee memoranda, and other invaluable materials. Not least, Anatoly Sergeyevich donated his personal diary to the National Security Archive to serve as a permanent eyewitness record of these years at the end of the Cold War, and we have counted on him for his perceptive analysis and generous descriptions of atmosphere and context. At the Gorbachev Foundation, our special thanks go to Vladlen Loginov, the unsung hero of the documentary record, who edits

the grand and meticulously compiled *Sobranie sochinenii*, which constitutes the most complete published record of the Gorbachev era. Another Gorbachev adviser, Andrei Grachev, was always helpful with his knowledge, his insights, and his books and personal archive.

We also owe an intellectual debt to Jack Matlock, eyewitness, key player, and acute analyst, whose files at the Reagan Library hold a treasure trove of primary sources, and whose books provide essential context and analysis on both the American and Soviet sides of the summits. Rodric Braithwaite, the British ambassador to the Soviet Union, always gave us support and insightful advice, along with access to his diaries and cables. We also thank David Hoffman, whose book *The Dead Hand* and thoughtful comments and advice provided a source of inspiration, in addition to his donation of documents, Mel Leffler for his always stimulating questions and ideas, Mary Sarotte for many in-depth conversations about German unification, and William Taubman, whose forthcoming biography of Gorbachev will become the standard in the field. Among the academics whose books were invaluable to us and which we consulted repeatedly are Archie Brown, Robert English, Ray Garthoff and Frances FitzGerald. We benefitted from so much research by those who looked at the subject of the end of the Cold War before us that it is impossible to name them all, but this book could not have materialized without them.

We appreciate all the archival help we received at the Reagan and Bush libraries, especially from Robert Holzweiss at Bush and his superlative records manager, Zachary Roberts. At the Reagan Library, Shelley Williams was always helpful and welcoming, as were the many archivists and FOIA officers who worked on our endless requests. At both institutions, we are indebted to the prolific FOIA and MDR filers like Keren Yarhi-Milo, Jason Saltoun-Ebin, and the team of graduate students who worked with Jeffrey Engel (then at Texas A&M)—these researchers performed a great service not just to us, but to the public, because anybody's request that opens a file benefits all future researchers. Professor Engel and his team not only helped open but also then digitized key files including the Bush memcons and telcons to the benefit of all researchers. We are also grateful to the wonderful staff of the Hoover Institution Library, where we consulted the Katayev collection and the diaries of Stepanov-Mamaladze.

Essential financial support for the National Security Archive and for the research that produced this volume came from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, where Vartan Gregorian leads a brilliant team including Deana Arsenian, Pat Nicholas, and Carl Robichaud, among others. General support for the Archive that made this book possible came from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, where Emma Belcher and Mary Page seem always to be ahead of the curve. We also thank Nicole Bagley and the Brenn Foundation for providing several invaluable writers' retreat opportunities at the Musgrove conference center, each of which brought another chapter of this book to fruition.

We also must express our deep appreciation to the Central European University Press, where editor in chief Krisztina Kós has shepherded the Archive's series

of breakthrough documentary volumes, and editor Linda Kunos has always improved them. Longtime CEU Rector John Shattuck, the original chair of the Archive's board of directors, made the partnership especially robust, together with István Rév, the head of the Open Society Archives.

At the National Security Archive, Malcolm Byrne has been invaluable for the completion of this book, for the operation of the whole organization, and for the extraordinary quality of the entire series of readers with CEU Press—a series that reflects his vision and his superlative editing skills throughout. Always at our side as the book grew and then was trimmed has been our colleague Anna Melyakova, keeper of the manuscript, translator of Chernyaev, expert editor and proofer, and constant nudge. We also thank the diligent interns who worked on this manuscript over the years—Allison Brady, Danielle Thomas, Matthew McGorin, Christopher Johnson, Peter Oster, Robin Taylor, and Kian Byrne. Others at the Archive stepped up to fill the voids left by book duties and we especially thank Steve Paschke, Sue Bechtel, and Mary Curry. Another colleague, expert metadata creator Vickie Jacobs, built the index, for which both we and future readers thank her.

These last superpower summits, the conversations that ended the Cold War, are now finally on the record, from both sides, just in time to mark the 25 years that have passed since the Soviet Union went out of existence in December 1991. This book should remind us about contingency, about choice, about accident and coincidence, about the way the Cold War ended long before the Soviet Union did, and about the ways American policy tried to keep the Soviet Union together (contrary to current myths). This book has lessons to teach us about dialogue, about empathy, about mutual security. Most importantly, these historic actors (one was a professional, as well) come alive in their own words, and take us back to that time when human civilization hovered on an existential brink. These three men, Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush, walked us back from that nuclear brink, and this is their story, as they said it at the time, in their secret conversations, to each other. Just listen.

THOMAS BLANTON
SVETLANA SAVRANSKAYA
Washington, D.C., March 31, 2016

Main Actors

Akhromeyev, Sergey Fedorovich: marshal of the Soviet Union; chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, 1984–1988, military adviser to Gorbachev, 1988–1991.

Andreotti, Giulio: prime minister of Italy, 1989–1992.

Arbatov, Georgy Arkadievich: director of the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1965–1995; member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, 1990–1991.

Baker, James: U.S. secretary of state, 1989–1992.

Bessmertnykh, Alexander Alexandrovich: Soviet ambassador to the United States, 1990–1991; foreign minister of the USSR, January–August 1991.

Bush, George H.W.: vice president of the United States, 1981–1989; president of the United States, 1989–1993.

Broomfield, William: Republican Congressman from Michigan, 1957–1993.

Byrd, Robert: Democratic U.S. senator from West Virginia, 1959–2010.

Carlucci, Frank: assistant to the president for national security affairs, 1986–1987; United States secretary of defense, 1987–1989.

Casey, William J.: director of central intelligence, 1981–1987.

Chebrikov, Viktor Mikhailovich: chairman of the KGB, 1982–1988; secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, September 1988–September 1989.

Chernyaev, Anatoly Sergeyevich: foreign policy adviser to Gorbachev, 1986–1991; member of Central Committee of the CPSU, 1986–1991.

Delors, Jacques: President of the European Commission, 1985–1995.

Dobrynin, Anatoly Fedorovich: Soviet ambassador to the United States, 1962–1986; head of the CPSU International Department, 1986–1988.

Eagleburger, Lawrence: U.S. deputy secretary of state, 1989–1992.

Falin, Valentin Mikhailovich: head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, 1989–1991.

Fascell, Dante: Democratic congressman from Florida, 1955–1993.

Fokin, Vitold: prime minister of Ukraine, 1990–1992.

Gates, Robert M.: deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1987–1989; deputy national security adviser, 1989–1991; director of central intelligence, 1991–1993.

González, Felipe: prime minister of Spain, 1982–1996.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeyevich: general secretary of the CPSU, 1985–1991.

Gromyko, Andrei Andreyevich: foreign minister of the USSR, 1957–1985; chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, 1985–1988.

Hartman, Arthur A.: U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1981–1987.

Juan Carlos I: king of Spain, 1975–2014.

Kaifu, Toshiki: prime minister of Japan, 1989–1991.

Kampelman, Max: head and ambassador to the United States Delegations in Negotiations with the Soviet Union on Nuclear and Space Arms in Geneva, 1985–1989.

Karpov, Viktor: deputy foreign minister of the USSR, 1990–1991.

Kohl, Helmut: chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1982–1998.

Komplektov, Viktor Georgievich: Soviet ambassador to the United States, 1991–1992.

Kornienko, Georgy Markovich: deputy foreign minister of the USSR, 1981–1986.

Kravchuk, Leonid Makarovych: chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR; 1990–1991; president of Ukraine, 1991–1994.

Kryuchkov, Vladimir Alexandrovich: chairman of the KGB, 1988–1991; member of the CC CPSU Politburo, 1989–1990.

Ligachev, Yegor Kuzmich: member of the CC CPSU Politburo, 1985–1990; head of the Department of Organizational Party Work, 1983–1988.

Major, John: prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1990–1997.

Matlock, Jack: special assistant to the president and senior director of European and Soviet Affairs at the NSC, 1983–1987; U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1987–1991.

MacEachin, Douglas: director, CIA Office of Soviet Analysis, 1984–1989; later deputy director of intelligence.

McFarlane, Robert C.: assistant to the president for national security affairs, 1983–1985.

Mitterrand, François: president of France, 1981–1995.

Nazarbayev, Nursultan: prime minister of Kazakh SSR, 1984–1989; first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakh SSR, 1989–1991.

Nitze, Paul: special advisor to the president and secretary of state on arms control, 1984–1989.

Palazhchenko, Pavel: chief English interpreter for Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, 1985–1991.

Peres, Shimon: prime minister of Israel, 1984–1986.

Perle, Richard N.: assistant secretary of defense for global strategic affairs, 1981–1987.

Poindexter, John: assistant to the president for national security affairs, 1985–1986.

Pope John Paul II: born Karol Wojtyła in Poland; Pope, 1978–2005.

Powell, Colin: assistant to the president for national security affairs, 1987–1989; chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1989–1993.

Rice, Condoleezza: Soviet and East European affairs specialist on the National Security Council staff, 1989–1991.

Ridgway, Rozanne L.: U.S. ambassador to the GDR, 1983–1985; assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, 1985–1989.

Reagan, Ronald W.: president of the United States, 1981–1989.

Ryzhkov, Nikolay Ivanovich: chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, 1985–1991; member of the CC CPSU Politburo, 1985–1990.

Scowcroft, Brent: assistant to the president for national security affairs, 1989–1993.

Shevardnadze, Eduard Amvrosiyevich: foreign minister of the USSR, 1985–1990, November–December 1991.

Shultz, George P.: secretary of state, 1982–1989.

Sokolov, Sergey Leonidovich: marshal of the Soviet Union; defense minister, 1984–1987.

Solomentsev, Mikhail Sergeyevich: chairman of the CC CPSU Party Control Committee, 1983–1988.

Thatcher, Margaret: prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1979–1990.

Teltschik, Horst: national security adviser to Chancellor Kohl, 1982–1990.

Vorotnikov, Vitaly Ivanovich: member of the CC CPSU, 1983–1990.

Webster, William G.: director of the FBI, 1978–1987; director of central intelligence, 1987–1991.

Weinberger, Caspar W.: secretary of defense, 1981–1987.

Yakovlev, Aleksandr Nikolayevich: member of the CC CPSU Politburo, 1987–1990; senior adviser to Gorbachev, 1985–1991.

Yazov, Dmitri Timofeyevich: marshal of the Soviet Union; member of the CC CPSU, 1986–1991; defense minister, 1987–1991.

Yeltsin, Boris Nikolayevich: first secretary of the Moscow City Committee of the CPSU, 1985–1987; member of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, 1989–1990; member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1989–1990; chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian republic, 1990; president of Russia, 1991–1999.

Zaikov, Lev Nikolayevich: head of the Politburo Commission on Nuclear and Conventional Arms Control; CC CPSU secretary for defense industry; member of the CC CPSU Politburo, 1986–1990.

Zimyanin, Mikhail Vasilyevich: member of the CC CPSU, 1966–1987.

Chronology of Events

1985

- March 11:* Mikhail Gorbachev is elected general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) by the Central Committee after the death of Konstantin Chernenko.
- March 11:* Reagan writes Gorbachev a letter inviting him to visit the United States. Two weeks later, Gorbachev accepts and lays out a vision of improved relations between the two nations.
- April 8:* Gorbachev announces a halt to further deployment of Soviet intermediate-range SS-20 missiles in Europe as a sign of readiness to negotiate on reductions in INF.
- April 23:* The Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, which will officially launch the policy of *perestroika*, convenes.
- May 30:* A new round of U.S.-Soviet negotiations on nuclear and space weapons begins.
- June 29:* At a Politburo session, Eduard Shevardnadze is appointed Soviet foreign minister.
- October 5-6:* Gorbachev visits France on his first visit abroad. Mitterrand encourages him to reach out to Reagan and offers to act as an intermediary.
- November 19–21:* Gorbachev and Reagan hold their first summit, in Geneva.

1986

- January 15:* Gorbachev announces the Program for Comprehensive Elimination of Nuclear Weapons by the year 2000.
- April 26:* The Chernobyl nuclear disaster demonstrates to Kremlin leaders and their allies the potential effects of a nuclear war.
- July 25:* In a letter to Gorbachev, Reagan links SDI research and the elimination of ballistic missiles.
- October 11–13:* The U.S.-Soviet Summit in Reykjavik takes place. Reagan and Gorbachev come close to agreeing to abolish all strategic offensive weapons but fall short over differences concerning SDI.
- November 25:* Reagan accepts the resignation of John Poindexter as national security adviser as the Iran-contra scandal becomes public, leading to major turnover at the White House and multiple congressional and criminal investigations.

1987

- February 28:* Gorbachev announces a Politburo decision to “untie” the arms control package and agree to a separate treaty on INF.
- March 28–April 1:* British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visits Moscow. The Soviet media give full coverage to her highly critical views on Soviet human rights violations and continued military involvement in Afghanistan.
- April 13–16:* Secretary of State George Shultz visits Moscow to negotiate on arms control.
- May 6:* The U.S. and USSR agree to establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers in their respective capitals.
- June 2:* Reagan declares that Romania and Hungary should be offered most-favored-nation (MFN) status.
- June 12:* During a speech in West Berlin, Reagan rhetorically appeals to the Soviet leader: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”
- June 25–26:* Gorbachev promotes three supporters to full Politburo membership, including Aleksandr Yakovlev, and reduces the role of his chief rival, Yegor Ligachev.
- July 9:* Gorbachev announces that the Soviet Union will adopt the double global zero platform.
- September 10:* In a letter to Reagan, Gorbachev argues for faster progress on arms reduction, particularly INF, and outlines his concerns about SDI.
- September 15:* Shevardnadze visits the United States to negotiate on the INF Treaty and sign an agreement on Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers. He informs Shultz about the Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan.
- September 17:* Shevardnadze and Shultz agree in principle to the elimination of INF missiles.
- October 21–24:* Shultz visits the USSR to negotiate a final draft of the INF Treaty; he and Gorbachev hold a tense meeting on October 23 regarding adherence to the ABM Treaty.
- November 2:* At a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Gorbachev denounces Stalin’s legacy, defends *perestroika*, and announces his intention to seek a strategic arms agreement with the United States.
- December 7–10:* At the Washington summit, Reagan and Gorbachev sign the INF Treaty.
- December 11:* Reagan and Helmut Kohl discuss over the phone the progress of negotiations with the Soviets. The West German chancellor would be a key player throughout this period.

1988

- February 8:* Gorbachev announces a plan to withdraw from Afghanistan beginning May 15, 1988, and ending February 15, 1989.

March 13: Signifying continuing resistance in hard-line circles to Gorbachev's reforms, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* publishes the "Nina Andreyeva letter," which attacks *perestroika* in harsh terms.

May 15: The Soviet Union begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan.

May 27–June 1: The Moscow summit takes place. Reagan addresses students at Moscow State University.

June 28: In his address to the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU, Gorbachev calls for restructuring the government, new multi-candidate elections to the Supreme Soviet, more authority for local soviets and a new post of Union President.

July 25: In a speech to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shevardnadze rejects the class struggle as the basis for Soviet foreign policy.

September 30: The CC CPSU Plenum implements radical structural and personnel changes in the Central Committee.

October 14: Reflecting a notable strain of opinion within the U.S. government, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates delivers a pessimistic address about Gorbachev's ability to reform the USSR.

November 8: George H.W. Bush is elected president of the United States.

December 7: In a landmark speech at the United Nations, Gorbachev announces plans to cut the Soviet military by 500,000 troops and endorses the "common interests of mankind" as the basis of Soviet foreign policy.

December 7: After his speech, Gorbachev meets with Reagan and President-elect Bush at Governors Island in New York harbor. The summit is cut short by news of an earthquake in Armenia.

1989

January 20: Bush is inaugurated president. Within three days, he calls Gorbachev to promise no "foot-dragging" in the improvement of relations.

February 15: The USSR completes its military withdrawal from Afghanistan on schedule.

March 6: Negotiations on conventional arms in Europe open in Vienna.

March 7: Baker receives Shevardnadze at the U.S. ambassadorial residence in Vienna for their first private meeting.

March 16: The CC CPSU adopts an agricultural reform program that would break up the central agricultural ministry and allow individual farmers to lease farmland.

March 26: Elections to the new Soviet Congress of People's Deputies take place. Many Party and military officials lose to independent candidates. Boris Yeltsin and Andrei Sakharov win seats by large majorities.

April 2–4: Gorbachev visits Cuba where he finds Fidel Castro critical of Soviet reforms. He encourages Castro to engage with the United States.

April 6: Gorbachev travels to Great Britain. In a private meeting with Thatcher, he describes Bush's policy "pause" as "intolerable."

April 9: Soviet troops kill at least 20 Georgian nationalist demonstrators in Tbilisi.

April 20: The CPSU Politburo denounces the use of military force in Tbilisi.

April 25: One thousand Soviet tanks leave Hungary, marking the first stage of the planned Soviet withdrawal of 500,000 troops and 10,000 tanks from Eastern Europe by 1991.

May 15–18: Gorbachev visits China for the first Sino-Soviet summit in 30 years, and announces the “normalization” of relations.

May 18: The Lithuanian Supreme Soviet declares sovereignty.

May 25–June 9: The new Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies meets for the first time and elects Gorbachev president. The congress is televised and has a powerful public impact.

June 4: Chinese government troops with armored vehicles crush protests in Tiananmen Square, while voters in Poland give the opposition Solidarity movement a sweeping victory over the Communist Party in elections negotiated through the Roundtable process.

June 19: START negotiations resume in Geneva.

July 6: Addressing the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Gorbachev declares the USSR will not block reform in Eastern Europe and will promote comprehensive European political and economic integration in the framework of a “common European home.”

July 9–13: Bush is hailed by crowds in Poland and Hungary where he meets with the reform Communist leadership and with opposition figures in both countries.

July 22: The Lithuanian Parliament declares the 1940 Soviet annexation of the Baltics illegal.

August 18: Yakovlev holds a press conference to denounce “unequivocally” the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact which led to the annexation of the Baltics. However, he states that the Soviet government still considers the Baltics a part of the USSR.

September 8–10: *Rukh*—the nationalist movement in the Ukraine—holds its constituent congress in Kiev and displays the banned blue-and-yellow flag of independent Ukraine.

September 12: Yeltsin visits Washington, meets with Scowcroft and insists on seeing Bush. The president agrees to “walk in” and meet with Yeltsin for 15 minutes.

September 22–23: Shevardnadze and Baker meet at the latter’s ranch in Wyoming.

September 29: Thatcher stops in Moscow on the way from Japan. She speaks disapprovingly to Gorbachev of the idea of German unification.

October 26: Shevardnadze calls for the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

November 9: The GDR announces the opening of all borders, including the Berlin Wall.

December 1: Gorbachev meets with Pope John Paul II. He promises to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Vatican and enact a law guaranteeing freedom of conscience and the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

December 2–3: The Malta summit takes place.

December 18: The European Economic Community and the Soviet Union sign a 10-year commercial agreement.

1990

February 9, 1990: Baker tells Gorbachev in Moscow that NATO will expand “not an inch” to the East if the USSR agrees to German unification in NATO.

March 12: The Supreme Soviet elects Gorbachev president of the USSR.

May 30–June 4: The Washington/Camp David summit takes place.

June 7: The last leadership meeting of the Warsaw Pact takes place in Moscow.

July 15–16: Chancellor Kohl meets with Soviet leaders in Moscow and at the resort town of Arkhyz for final talks on German unification and related matters.

August 2: Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait.

August 3: The United States and USSR issue a joint statement condemning Iraqi aggression. Baker later calls this “the day the Cold War ended.”

August 6: The United States launches Operation Desert Shield in the Persian Gulf.

September 9: Gorbachev and Bush meet in Helsinki for a one-day informal summit to discuss the Persian Gulf.

October 15: Gorbachev is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The announcement is received negatively by many Soviets. Gorbachev decides not to attend the ceremony.

November 19–21: The Paris CSCE summit takes place. Participants sign the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and adopt the Charter for Europe. Gorbachev and Bush meet on the margins of the summit.

December 20: Shevardnadze steps down as foreign minister, accusing Gorbachev of a political swing to the right and warning of a coming dictatorship.

1991

January 13: Bloody Sunday takes place in Vilnius as Soviet interior troops with tanks attack protesters, leaving 15 dead and several hundred wounded. The tragedy follows other recent acts of suppression in the Baltics by Soviet forces.

January 15: Soviet Ambassador Bessmertnykh is recalled from Washington and named foreign minister.

January 16: Operation Desert Storm is launched in the Persian Gulf. Gorbachev tries unsuccessfully to delay the start of military action by 48 hours to allow one more effort to talk to Saddam Hussein.

January 28: Bessmertnykh visits Washington. He hands Bush a letter from Gorbachev on the Baltics, saying the use of force was not a presidential policy and will not be repeated.

February 23: The ground offensive in Iraq begins overnight. Gorbachev calls Bush hours beforehand to try to persuade him to postpone the operation.

March 17: An all-Union referendum takes place on preserving the Soviet Union as a “renewed federation of equal sovereign republics.” Seventy-seven percent of respondents vote in favor, the highest totals coming from the republics of Central Asia.

March 31: The Warsaw Pact ceases to exist.

April 23: At a state dacha outside Moscow, Gorbachev and nine republic leaders launch the “Novo-Ogarevo process” of drafting a new Union treaty.

May 6: Shevardnadze visits the United States as a private citizen and urges Bush to support Soviet reform and Gorbachev.

June 12: Yeltsin is elected president of the Russian Federation.

June 14: CFE agreements, refining the treaty signed in November 1990, are ratified by CFE ambassadors in Vienna.

June 19–21: Yeltsin makes his first visit to Washington as Russian president.

July 17: Gorbachev addresses the G-7 summit in London. He hopes to garner major financial support from the West and to win agreement to integrate the USSR into international economic institutions. In one-on-one meeting with Bush, the two presidents finalize the remaining issues with the START Treaty.

July 29–August 1: The Moscow summit takes place, featuring the signing of the START Treaty. The night before the summit, Gorbachev receives a commitment from nine republican leaders to support the new Union Treaty. During the summit, Bush meets separately with Yeltsin and with Nursultan Nazarbayev, leader of Kazakhstan.

August 1: Bush travels to the Ukrainian capital where he delivers what is dubbed the “Chicken Kiev” speech.

August 19–21: An anti-Gorbachev coup takes place, led by the heads of the KGB and the military. Gorbachev is placed under house arrest at Foros on the Black Sea. In Moscow, Yeltsin consolidates democratic forces to resist the takeover. The coup crumbles on the third day.

September 27: Bush calls Gorbachev to inform him about a breakthrough initiative on unilateral nuclear arms reductions he is about to unveil. Gorbachev responds enthusiastically and soon offers his own far-reaching proposals.

October 29–30: The Madrid summit on the Middle East takes place.

December 1: A referendum in Ukraine overwhelmingly (92 percent) approves a declaration of independence passed by the Rada the previous August.

December 8: Three key republic leaders—Yeltsin (Russia), Kravchuk (Ukraine) and Shushkevich (Belarus)—meet at Belovezhskaya Pushcha, in Belarus near the Polish border. They declare the Soviet Union dissolved and a new entity, the Commonwealth of Independent States, established. Yeltsin calls Bush ahead of Gorbachev to inform him.

December 25: Gorbachev resigns as president of the USSR, symbolically terminating the existence of the Soviet Union. He calls Bush to inform him and the two briefly revisit their joint achievements.

Chapter 1

THE GENEVA SUMMIT, 1985

The most striking aspect of the Geneva summit in November 1985 was that it occurred at all. More than six years had passed since the last time the leaders of the U.S. and the Soviet Union had met—in Vienna in 1979—and since then the détente of the 1970s had come completely apart; with crises in Nicaragua, Iran, and the Horn of Africa; the demise of the SALT II arms control treaty; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; grain and Olympic boycotts in 1980; and dramatic U.S. defense spending increases, first under President Carter and then even more under President Reagan, whose hard-line rhetoric drowned out simultaneous conciliatory gestures like the lifting of the grain embargo.¹

On the Soviet side, the leadership had degenerated into a dysfunctional collective of sick, old men, making self-destructive decisions as on Afghanistan and the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe. They were in all probability incapable of responding in kind even had the U.S. sought continued détente. Superpower tensions culminated in 1982 and 1983 in the most dangerous superpower faceoff since the Cuban Missile Crisis, to the point where the chief of the Soviet General Staff would tell Warsaw Pact commanders the threat was comparable to the 1930s “on the verge of the outbreak of the Second World War,” and that “the Reagan administration has inaugurated open preparations for war.”² General Secretary Yuri Andropov, the moving force behind the Soviet hard-line reaction, would describe as “illusions” any notion of improvement in relations. So actually getting the superpower leaders to Geneva in 1985 was quite a feat, made possible only by the change in leadership in Moscow earlier that year; even so, no one would have expected four more such meetings in the remaining four years of Reagan’s presidency.

The eager summitry of Reagan’s second term struck most American observers as a stark reversal from the “evil empire” rhetoric and deficit spending for defense in the first term.³ Yet, there was actually far more continuity in the Reagan approach than met the public eye, either at the time or subsequently. The president’s top Soviet expert, Jack Matlock, opened his account of the Reagan-Gorbachev relationship with a series of Reagan quotes from the early 1980s urging

¹ See Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, pp. 319–337 and 353–360 for extended discussion of the end of détente.

² Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, chief of the General Staff, speech to the Warsaw Pact Chiefs of Staff, Minsk, September 8–10, 1982 (from the Freiburg military archives), in Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle?*, p. 466.

³ See Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*.

peace and arms reductions, in a deliberate counter to the public and media perception of Reagan as purely a hard-liner; and Matlock blamed the media's inclination to seize on arresting phrases ("evil empire" and "we start bombing in five minutes") without the caveat that Reagan uttered each of these only once.⁴

Reagan himself devoted dozens of pages in his memoir to direct quotes from the series of often eloquent letters he hand-wrote to Soviet leaders, starting with Leonid Brezhnev, right after the March 1981 assassination attempt.⁵ Reagan described his motivation this way: "Perhaps having come so close to death made me feel I should do whatever I could in the years God had given me to reduce the threat of nuclear war...."⁶ Reagan wrote Brezhnev that he was lifting the grain embargo put in place by Jimmy Carter as punishment for the Afghanistan invasion, and he wanted to include a specific phrase in that letter about his ultimate goal—"a world without nuclear weapons"—but his secretary of state, Alexander Haig, talked him out of it on the grounds that these words "might perhaps be confusing to the Soviet leaders."⁷ Likely more puzzling was the formal cover letter Reagan allowed Haig to attach, blustering against the Soviet military buildup and putting off any consideration of a summit. As biographer Edmund Morris put it, Reagan "left it to Brezhnev to figure out which letter more truly conveyed his personal feelings."⁸ Brezhnev's "icy reply" made Reagan remark, "So much for my first attempt at personal diplomacy."⁹

To the extent there really was a "Reagan reversal," it occurred midway through his first term and domestic politics played a significant role that is usually missing from diplomatic histories.¹⁰ The 1982 recession, combined with evident international tensions (especially in the NATO alliance, and with mammoth anti-nuclear demonstrations in the U.S. and Europe), led to Democratic gains in the fall 1982 elections and major declines in President Reagan's approval ratings. Likewise, significant personnel shifts in the administration opened new

⁴ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 3–4.

⁵ At least three full archival boxes at the Reagan Presidential Library contain these epistles and the various typed and handwritten drafts, together with the Russian-language and translated versions of the Soviet responses. See Ronald Reagan Library, National Security Council, Executive Secretariat Collection, or Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Collection, Head of State File, Boxes 37–39. Most of the contents were declassified as the result of the authors' and other researchers' Freedom of Information Act and declassification requests, including NLSS97-001 and F99-051.

⁶ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 269.

⁷ Cannon, *Role of a Lifetime*, p. 301; Morris, *Dutch*, pp. 436–438.

⁸ Morris, *Dutch*, p. 438.

⁹ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 273. The exchange of letters may be found at Ronald Reagan Library, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Head of State File, U.S.S.R. General Secretary Brezhnev (File 8100630), Box 37, released under NLSS97-001.

¹⁰ Reagan's foreign policy, as of early 1983, could only be considered a failure, a fact most astutely analyzed by FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, comparing and contrasting the memoirs by 14 highest-level Reagan administration officials; see especially pp. 148–199.

possibilities, with the departure of the imperious Haig and of Team B's leading light, Richard Pipes, to keep his tenured spot at Harvard.¹¹ Haig's replacement as secretary of state, the veteran office-holder George Shultz, marveled at the invitation to the White House for a February 1983 dinner of just the president, Shultz and their spouses, where they agreed to take the initiative to reach out to the Soviets.¹² Shultz then summoned Matlock from his ambassador's post in Prague in May to take over Pipes' fortress at the NSC, and Matlock's files contain dozens of items in his "USSR-Summitry" folders from 1983. For example, former President Richard Nixon wrote Reagan (and Shultz) as early as March 4, 1983, remarking "I gather from press reports that a Reagan/Andropov summit will take place some time this year or next" but arguing against "a quickie get-acquainted summit" and for a substantive agenda beyond just arms control, even "a program for annual summits."¹³ In June 1983, Deputy National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane tasked Matlock to write a paper for their boss, William Clark, to give the President on "what should be our agenda" for discussions with the Soviets; the same note indicates it was the president himself who was pushing for a summit, while his aides were "emphasizing the damage which can be done to our long term interests by creating a false euphoria in the minds of Americans which makes it difficult to contend with continued misbehavior by the Soviets in the wake of a summit."¹⁴ A similar dynamic was taking place in the president's head of state correspondence: Reagan responded to Andropov's 4th of July 1983 letter mentioning "elimination of the nuclear threat" with his own handwritten draft: "If we can agree on mutual, verifiable reductions in the no. of nuclear weapons we both hold, could this not be a first step toward elimination of all such weapons? What a blessing this would be for all the people we both rep." The language shocked his national security advisers, such as William Clark, who redrafted the president's response in formulaic style.¹⁵ So much for letting Reagan be Reagan.

It is hard to imagine the Geneva summit taking place had Andropov, who was two years younger than the American leader, survived his kidney disease and

¹¹ For a discussion of Team B, see Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 182–183.

¹² Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 164–167. Of course, only a month later, Shultz would hear about Reagan's "Star Wars" missile defense speech the day before delivery, with no chance for input.

¹³ Richard Nixon to George Shultz, March 4, 1983, in Ronald Reagan Library, Jack Matlock Files, Box 36, File "USSR-Summitry 1/2." Declassified through FOIA request F06-114/11.

¹⁴ Robert McFarlane to Jack Matlock, Subject: Summitry, in Ronald Reagan Library, Jack Matlock Files, Box 36, File "USSR-Summitry 2/2." The same file includes several drafts of the Clark-to-Reagan memo, expressing concerns that "pressures for a summit" might "erode our ability to maintain our defense programs," and comments on the memo from CIA director William Casey and other officials, along with arguments for and against inviting Andropov for a meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

¹⁵ Morris, *Dutch*, pp. 487–488.

continued as the Soviet general secretary.¹⁶ The available Soviet evidence suggests that in fact U.S. policies and actions in the early 1980s delayed whatever reform impulses existed in Brezhnev's and Andropov's USSR by providing opponents of reform with arguments against better relations with the West and relaxation of internal controls. As long-time Soviet ambassador Dobrynin later wrote:

The impact of the American hard line on the internal debates of the Politburo and the attitudes of the Soviet leadership almost always turned out to be just the opposite of the one intended by Washington. Rather than retreating from the awesome military buildup that underwrote Reagan's belligerent rhetoric, the Soviet leaders began to absorb Reagan's own distinctive thesis that Soviet-American relations could remain permanently bad as a deliberate choice of policy. Only gradually did both sides begin to realize they were doomed to annihilation unless they found a way out. But it took a great deal of time and effort to turn from confrontation and mutual escalation, probably much more than if this course had never been taken in the first place.¹⁷

This interactivity with American actions and rhetoric was not so evident from Washington, especially during crises like the Soviet shoot-down of the Korean Airlines jetliner in September 1983—promptly denounced in the most vociferous (and inaccurate) terms by U.S. leaders.¹⁸ The KAL tragedy eliminated any notion on the U.S. side of summitry with Andropov, just as the Soviet leader headed to the hospital for the fall, battling the kidney disease that would kill him.¹⁹ Moscow's rhetoric toughened to match Washington's; in Andropov's words: "If anyone had any illusions about the possibility of an evolution for the better in the policy of the present American administration, recent events have dispelled them once and for all."²⁰ The top Soviet leaders even feared a first strike by the

¹⁶ Ambassador Jack Matlock argued in his book, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, that had Andropov lived, the Soviet Union could have weathered U.S. pressure "for a decade or more so long as the Communist Party remained in firm control of the country and did not try to match the U.S. defense effort" (p. xiii). Interestingly, Robert Gates endorses the Andropov counterfactual in his own 1996 book, *From the Shadows*: "I believe that if Andropov had been younger and healthier, the odds are great that we would still be face-to-face with the Soviet Union, still militarily powerful though still doomed eventually—steadily declining, weakening" (pp. 554–555).

¹⁷ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 544.

¹⁸ Contrary to Reagan's and Shultz's public statements, U.S. intelligence agencies knew almost immediately after the shoot-down that the Soviets thought they were attacking a spy plane, not a civilian airliner; yet the "shoot first, ask questions later" approach and Moscow's attempts at cover-up only reinforced the American condemnation. See Hersh, *The Target Is Destroyed*.

¹⁹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 64–66.

²⁰ Statement broadcast on Soviet TV and radio, September 28, 1983, quoted in Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 52.

U.S., famously misreading a NATO command-and-control exercise codenamed “Able Archer.”²¹ After the controversial West European deployment of Pershing intermediate-range missiles in fall 1983 (matching the earlier modernization of Soviet INF forces in the form of SS-20s), the Soviets walked out of arms control talks, while massive protests against the arms race and for a nuclear freeze filled plazas in Western capitals. Overall, the level of international tensions was such that then-CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence Robert Gates, for example, later titled his memoir chapter on 1983 “The Most Dangerous Year.”²²

The fall of 1983 did bring a dramatic upsurge of awareness in Ronald Reagan of the Soviet sense of threat—a leap of empathy that would drive his approach to Moscow from that point on. Reagan had surely been briefed before then on the likelihood of nuclear Armageddon inherent in U.S. war plans, yet his diary described almost as if it were news a briefing in October 1983 on a report he had asked for “two years earlier” on nuclear war-fighting.²³ On October 10, he saw an ABC television movie on the aftermath of a nuclear explosion in Lawrence, Kansas—*The Day After*, an advance copy, screened at Camp David with Nancy (since national broadcast was not until November 20). Reagan wrote in his diary: “It is very effective and left me greatly depressed. So far they haven’t sold any ads scheduled and I can see why.... My own reaction: we have to do all we can ... to see that there is never a nuclear war.”²⁴ Biographer Morris, who had access to more primary sources on Reagan than any other outsider, later wrote that this entry was the only instance in the entire corpus of Reagan’s notes, diaries, letters and drafts in which the president mentions being “depressed.”²⁵

Coming at the same time as a flood of intelligence from KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky about Soviet expectations of a U.S. first strike, the fall’s combination of war scares—the KAL shoot-down, the bombing of the Marine barracks in

²¹ See the forthcoming book by Nate Jones on Able Archer, as well as his Able Archer Sourcebook at www.nsarchive.org, including the newly declassified 1990 report from the president’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board that concluded the U.S. “may have inadvertently placed our relations with the Soviet Union on a hair trigger” in 1983. See also Fischer, *A Cold War Conundrum*; and Mastny, “How Able Was ‘Able Archer’?” pp. 108–123. Only a year earlier, the leak of the Pentagon’s highly-classified Defense Planning Guidance had produced headlines like “Preparing for Fighting a Long Nuclear War” and alarmed both the Soviet military and the American public. See Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 137.

²² Gates, *From the Shadows*, pp. 258–277.

²³ Thomas Reed has described the IVY LEAGUE command-and-control exercise in March 1982 in which Reagan became acquainted with the mammoth quality of the American nuclear response and “looked on in stunned disbelief,” but Michael Deaver has claimed that he and others, knowing Reagan’s feelings about nuclear weapons, delayed the full SIOP briefing until the fall of 1983. See Reed, *At the Abyss*, pp. 241–245 (Reed calls the exercise “Ivory Leaf” to disguise the codeword). The authors thank William Burr for this citation.

²⁴ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 585.

²⁵ Morris, *Dutch*, p. 498.

Beirut, the simultaneous U.S. invasion of Grenada, the television movie, and the war-fighting briefing—all combined to give Reagan, who recycled ancient jokes and lessons and scripts *ad infinitum*, a whole new understanding of what the world might look like from Moscow. Reagan in his memoir commented that his first

[t]hree years had taught me something surprising about the Russians: Many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans. Perhaps this shouldn't have surprised me, but it did [T]he more experience I had with Soviet leaders and other heads of state who knew them, the more I began to realize that many Soviet officials feared us not only as adversaries but as potential aggressors who might hurl nuclear weapons at them in a first strike; because of this, and perhaps because of a sense of insecurity and paranoia with roots reaching back to the invasions of Russia by Napoleon and Hitler, they had aimed a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons at us. Well, if that was the case, I was even more anxious to get a top Soviet leader in a room alone and try to convince him we had no designs on the Soviet Union and Russians had nothing to fear from us.²⁶

With some newfound empathy for Moscow's views, plus a sense of accomplishment from the defense buildup (even though the U.S. military and strategic position was never as weak as Reagan had claimed during his 1980 presidential campaign), the president was ready to make a breakthrough in U.S.-Soviet relations. On November 16, 1983, Reagan directed Shultz and McFarlane (replacing Clark as head of the NSC) to form a small group with Matlock as staff, meeting confidentially on Saturdays, to rework U.S. policy. The minutes of the first group meeting, from November 19, 1983, show consensus on the need for an authoritative speech by the president, and contain Vice President Bush's explanation for the urgency—"[t]here is a public perception that we are not communicating with the Soviets, and this makes the public uneasy. There is a need to convince the public that we are in fact in communication."²⁷ The Reagan speech of January 16, 1984, largely drafted by Matlock, laid out the Soviet policy Reagan would pursue through the end of his time in the White House. Most remarkable was the final section of the speech, added by Reagan himself, appealing to the common human interests held by the archetypal Russians, "Ivan and Anya," and Americans "Jim and Sally."

Yet the speech was far more important in Washington—since it marked the transition from the Caspar Weinberger-style hard line to George Shultz-style pragmatism—than it was in Moscow. In fact, the highest levels of the Soviet foreign

²⁶ Reagan, *An American Life*, pp. 588–589.

²⁷ Small Group, Meeting of November 19, 1983, 7:30 a.m., Secretary's Dining Room, Department of State, in Ronald Reagan Library, Jack Matlock Files, Box 34, File: [Saturday Group – Notes] (Nov – Dec 1983). Declassified through Mandatory Review request M02-005.

policy apparatus dismissed the speech out of hand (as did no few Americans, seeing election-year politicking instead of foreign policy shifting). Veteran Soviet diplomat Sergey Tarasenko recounted at post-Cold-War conferences—much to the surprise of speechwriter Matlock—how Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko denigrated the January 1984 speech as just more propaganda, and how the speech was therefore not even read by other Soviet leaders.²⁸

The U.S. files reveal a certain qualitative difference in Reagan's approach before and after this point in his letters to Soviet leaders. Reagan annotated one Brezhnev letter in 1982, for example, the same way Richard Pipes might have, remarking that the Soviet buildup for 35 years contradicted claims that Moscow wanted peace, that the USSR's leaders had never told the truth to the Soviet people (so how could the latter judge anything?), and that Brezhnev was just a "barrel of laughs."²⁹ In contrast, by the time Reagan responded to Konstantin Chernenko in 1984, the language had become comparable to the exchanges he would have with Gorbachev only a year or two later. Reagan went out of his way with Chernenko to recognize Soviet fears of outside aggression and the scale of Soviet losses fighting Hitler. Even more striking, Reagan's language (again drafted by Matlock) acknowledged Soviet fears that ballistic missile defenses might look like "space strike weapons" yet assured the Soviet leader this was absolutely not Reagan's intent, and proceeded to argue on this account for the elimination of nuclear weapons.³⁰

In Reagan's memoir, he complained he never could get talks going with Soviet leaders, despite multiple handwritten letters and profound sincerity: "'How am I supposed to get anyplace with the Russians,' I asked Nancy, 'if they keep dying on me?'" (Brezhnev in 1982, Andropov in 1984, Chernenko in 1985).³¹ Not until Gorbachev did Reagan finally locate a producer—even a co-star—for the movie he had always wanted to make about U.S.-Soviet relations. So the real turning point that made the summits possible was not the change in U.S. policy, which had taken root well over a year earlier, but the election of the man from Stavropol as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Reagan's

²⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 86–87, discusses Chernyaev's reaction that he never heard of the speech, and Tarasenko's description of Gromyko's refusal to take it seriously despite other Soviet diplomats (Matlock cites Oleg Grinevsky) seeing a new tone.

²⁹ Brezhnev to Reagan, May 1982, discussed in Reagan, *An American Life*, pp. 553–554.

³⁰ Reagan to Chernenko, March 6, 1984, and April 16, 1984, Ronald Reagan Library, NSC, Executive Secretariat, Head of State File, Box 39, released through FOIA request F99-051. The latter epistle on p. 7 contains a handwritten "P.S." that reads: "Mr. Chairman, In thinking through this letter, I have reflected at some length on the tragedy & scale of Soviet losses in warfare through the ages. Surely those losses which are beyond description, must affect your thinking today. I want you to know that neither I nor the American people hold any offensive intentions towards you or the Soviet people."

³¹ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 611. Edmund Morris gives the quote as "How can I be expected to make peace with them, if they keep dying on me?" (Morris, *Dutch*, p. 517).

closest ally, the conservative prime minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, had already famously pronounced that she found Gorbachev a man she “could do business with” after his visit to London in December 1984, and before his elevation to the leadership post.³² So Reagan wasted no time reaching out, sending Vice President George Bush along with Shultz to the Chernenko funeral in March 1985 with a conciliatory message for Gorbachev, including an invitation for a summit. Even though Gorbachev did not accept on the spot, public signals from both Moscow and Washington pointed to agreement on such a meeting, the formal announcement of which would come in early July.³³

Between Gorbachev’s ascension to power and the Geneva lakeside summit in November that same year came a remarkable series of letters, several of them handwritten, between the two leaders, multiple flare-ups in the superpower relationship, constant initiatives from Gorbachev that found little resonance on the U.S. side, and no small amount of internal disagreements on each side as to the desirability of the summit. Gorbachev sent his first private letter on March 24, responding to the Bush-Shultz invitation, welcoming the idea of a summit, and proposing—in a prophetic description of what would actually happen in Geneva—that the encounter should “not necessarily be concluded by signing some major documents” but rather “be a meeting to search for mutual understanding.”³⁴ That same day, a Soviet guard in East Germany shot and killed a U.S. military liaison officer, Major Arthur Nicholson, while he was photographing Soviet equipment in a tank garage. Denunciations by both sides (“murder” versus “intruders”) could have turned into another KAL affair, but Reagan stated publicly the incident made him “more anxious to go to” a summit, and wrote a private letter to Gorbachev on April 4 saying the Nicholson killing “threatens to undo our best efforts.”³⁵

The pen-pal correspondence between Reagan and Gorbachev in 1985 demonstrated the two leaders’ real desire for dialogue, as well as how far apart the two sides were, both in substantive positions and in basic mutual understanding. The Reagan letters repeatedly emphasized his intention to assign a purely defensive mission for the proposed Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), while Gorbachev’s missives continually raised the fear of “attack space weapons capable

³² For an eloquent recent account of the Thatcher factor with Gorbachev, see Brown, “The Change to Engagement in Britain’s Cold War Policy.” Of course, the classic account of Gorbachev’s instrumentality in ending the Cold War is Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*.

³³ For summaries of both *Pravda* and *New York Times* coverage of the signals, see Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 207–209.

³⁴ Gorbachev letter to Reagan, March 24, 1985, Ronald Reagan Library, NSC: Head of State File, USSR: Gorbachev, Box 40, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive. See also Reagan’s commentary on the exchange of letters, in *An American Life*, p. 612.

³⁵ Reagan letter to Gorbachev, April 4, 1985, Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive. For detail on reactions to the Nicholson tragedy, see Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 209–212.

of performing purely offensive missions”—previewing a kind of dialogue of the deaf that would echo throughout the Geneva proceedings.

But in Moscow, things were changing. On July 2, Gorbachev replaced long-time Foreign Minister Gromyko with a foreign policy neophyte, the party secretary from Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze. Arms control proposals cascaded from Moscow, both in the letters to Reagan and in public pronouncements: in July a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing (promptly rejected by the U.S.); in September a 50 percent cut in strategic warheads; in October a unilateral reduction in Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe; in November (during an otherwise argumentative meeting with Shultz) a quick bilateral cut of 200 to 300 ICBMs, as evidence of earnest intentions. This flurry fell into a kind of limbo in Washington, caught in the internal disagreements and disarray that so often prevented the Americans from taking up offers even when they were plainly in the U.S. national security interest. Meanwhile in Moscow there was serious doubt the U.S. would ever leave behind its earlier hard-line stance. However, European perceptions gave Gorbachev credit for taking the initiative, and both Reagan and Gorbachev had the personal self-confidence to proceed to Geneva, each convinced they could persuade the other to come around.

That first meeting in late 1985 was an eye-opener on both sides. According to Anatoly Dobrynin's memoir, the maximum the Soviets hoped to achieve from the summit was a joint statement against nuclear war, given Reagan's previous rhetoric, defense build-up, and saber-rattling. Dobrynin cites the November 11, 1985, memo prepared by the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry and the KGB, which after discussion by the Politburo became the basic assessment by the Soviet leadership: "[T]he best we can expect is a joint statement that both sides will proceed from the assumption that nuclear war is unacceptable and unwinnable."³⁶ Under the influence of the "evil empire" rhetoric and the "war scare" of 1983 (not to mention U.S. refusals to rule out first-use of nuclear weapons as part of its deterrence strategy in Europe), the Soviet side did not seem to realize that the language ultimately agreed to—"a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought"—was exactly Reagan's formulation from years earlier, from his weekly radio address of April 17, 1982. And even before that, at a March 31, 1982, press conference, in response to a question about winning a nuclear war, Reagan had said, "I don't believe there could be any winners ... Everybody would be a loser."³⁷ In the January 1984 speech most famous for its Ivan and Anya appeal, the president had said specifically that the U.S. and the USSR had "common interests and foremost among them is to avoid war and reduce the level of arms.... I support the zero option for all nuclear weapons."³⁸ And just prior to the summit, in his correspondence with Gorbachev, Reagan had explicitly

³⁶ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, pp. 585–586.

³⁷ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1982*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 487–488.

³⁸ Reagan, "Address to the Nation," January 16, 1984.

accepted the Soviet proposal that the two sides agree nuclear war could never be won and must never be fought.³⁹

Gorbachev not only shared Reagan's dream of a nuclear-free world, he also appreciated the cinematic aspect of the summits. In high school he played starring stage roles, often went to the theater as an adult, and was quite a good actor on the political stage.⁴⁰ In Geneva in 1985, however, as Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev later noted, only one of the two actors was a professional, and at least partially as a result the visual scenes at Geneva favored the American—from the hatless and coatless older man greeting the bundled younger fellow on the front steps of the chateau, to the staged “fireside chat” at the boathouse scouted out by Reagan and his wife the day before, to the standing ovation in the U.S. Congress that greeted Reagan when he returned.⁴¹

During the very first session at Geneva, the two leaders put their stamp on the summit. What was scheduled as a brief 15-minute get-acquainted session with only interpreters present stretched to over an hour—the first of more than five hours of one-on-one meetings over two days. This was Reagan's plan—as he wrote in his diary in 1983—“to get a top Soviet leader in a room alone” and persuade him “Russians had nothing to fear from us.” But Gorbachev had an equal desire for private dialogue, stopping the American president in this first meeting as Reagan tried to move them out to the formal plenary, offering “cooperation rather than confrontation” as the solution to conflict, and even providing “confidential information” about Soviet scientists' predictions of a looming earthquake in California.⁴²

The opening plenary session at Geneva became the archetype for the Reagan-Gorbachev discussions for the next four years, containing all the elements Gorbachev would hear from Reagan perhaps two dozen times more, and indeed, would tire of hearing. As Reagan had started to say in the private meeting, he emphasized that the problem between the two countries was not their respective “mountains of weapons” but the history of distrust and fear. The American acknowledged and sought to assuage Gorbachev's worry that the U.S. sought “a first strike capability by having an anti-missile shield,” arguing that missile defense was not a weapon, but purely defensive: “If we could come up with a shield and share it, then nobody

³⁹ See lengthy excerpts from the Reagan-Gorbachev correspondence in Reagan, *An American Life*, pp. 624–631, including the explicit statement “it is indeed my view that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” in Reagan's October 31, 1985 letter; and Document Nos. 6, 7, 9 and 10 in Svetlana Savranskaya and Tom Blanton, eds., “To the Geneva Summit: Perestroika and the Transformation of U.S.-Soviet Relations,” *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 172*, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB172/index.htm.

⁴⁰ See the forthcoming biography by William Taubman for the most insightful analysis of Gorbachev's personality and early history.

⁴¹ For illuminating commentary, including the Yakovlev quote, see FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 312–313.

⁴² Memorandum of Conversation, First Private Meeting, November 19, 1985, 10:20–11:20 a.m., Document No. 9.

would worry about the mad man.”⁴³ But Gorbachev kept returning to the vision of a first strike emanating from space weapons, a Cold War echo of the Hitler-blitzkrieg nightmare that was so seared into Soviet consciousness.

The exchange at the very end of Geneva’s second plenary, just before Reagan and Gorbachev went for a walk, captured the essence of the two views. According to the American record, Gorbachev asked “whether the President considered developing SDI weapons as the militarization of space” [obviously the Soviet view]. “The President replied that he did not. If the technology was developed, it should be shared. Neither side should deploy until the other did. It should be done in combination with lowering offensive weapons so that neither could gain a first strike advantage.”⁴⁴ But the Soviet leader was not reassured, and during the third plenary the repetitive discussion degenerated into interruptions and heated exchanges. At one point, Gorbachev accused Reagan of “inject[ing] banalities” with a reference to the Soviet ABM system as if it were the equivalent of the SDI research by the Americans. At another point, “Gorbachev asked the President with some emotion why he would not believe him when he said the Soviet Union would never attack. Before the President could respond, Gorbachev repeated the question The President stated that no individual could say to the U.S. people that they should rely on his personal faith rather than on sound defense. Gorbachev questioned the sincerity of the President’s willingness to share SDI research, pointing out that the U.S. did not share its most advanced technology even with its allies.” Reagan digressed, “Perhaps the President in a previous life had been the inventor of the shield.” Previously, Gorbachev had charged, “Describing these weapons as a shield was only packaging.” To Reagan’s argument that madmen could threaten even a world without nuclear weapons, Gorbachev declared, “Ways could be found to prevent madmen. Because of one madman, should we have an arms race in space?” Reagan allowed that he “was aware that SDI research dealt with systems such as lasers and particle beam devices which had weapons applications. These systems, however, were designed not to kill people, but to stop nuclear missiles from reaching their target.”⁴⁵

Subsequently, Jack Matlock would conclude that Gorbachev made a “strategic error” at Geneva in not pressing Reagan for written commitments to share missile defense when it was completed (if ever) and to open the laboratories in the meantime.⁴⁶ On the Soviet side, Ambassador Dobrynin also felt that Gorbachev missed an opportunity by getting “unreasonably fixated” on space weapons, and therefore making a resolution of that issue into a “precondition for summit success.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Memorandum of conversation, First Plenary Meeting, November 19, 1985, 11:27 a.m.–12:15 p.m., Document No. 10.

⁴⁴ Document No. 11.

⁴⁵ Document No. 15.

⁴⁶ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 168.

⁴⁷ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 591.

In all the sound and fury about space weapons and shields, lost to most observers (including President Reagan) was a significant change in Soviet posture on regional conflicts, especially Afghanistan. During the second plenary session, Gorbachev had led off his presentation of regional issues in a matter-of-fact, even jocular tone, far removed from the belligerence that had previously characterized U.S.-Soviet exchanges on these matters, and far from the usual Soviet counterattack on American support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan or contras in Nicaragua. He proposed U.S.-Soviet cooperation on Afghanistan, and described Moscow's goals as the installation of a non-aligned Afghan government, withdrawal of Soviet troops, the return of refugees, international guarantees of no outside interference, and internal political reconciliation. Gorbachev remarked, "The U.S. speaks of Afghanistan and Ethiopia as if it were the Soviet Union that stirred the pot there. But we first heard of the revolutions there on the radio." Reagan's response missed the tone change and the negotiating opening for Soviet withdrawal, and instead repeated the talking points from his note cards, blaming the Soviets for creating the three million refugees in Afghanistan, subsidizing the unwarranted military buildup in Nicaragua, and enabling the North Vietnamese to take over Cambodia. Afterwards, a senior U.S. official (apparently Secretary of State Shultz) mentioned Gorbachev's overture to at least one journalist, Don Oberdorfer of *The Washington Post*, who headlined "Afghanistan, Arms Major Summit Themes" on November 22, 1985. But Reagan's response, returning to his own proposals from a United Nations speech rather than taking up Gorbachev's new signals, was more typical of the highly skeptical stance in Washington that would continue to the very moment of final Soviet withdrawal in February 1989.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most unusual moment during the summit was Reagan's extraordinary dinner toast at the Soviet mission on the evening before the final day. For his own toast, Gorbachev had used a quote from the Bible (from the Book of Ecclesiastes)—that there was a time to throw stones and a time to gather them, to which he added: now was the time to collect the stones that had been cast in the past. In other words, the president and he should move to resolve their practical disagreements on the last day of the summit. In his response, Reagan provided the most dramatic expression of his abhorrence of nuclear weapons and his dream for U.S.-Soviet relations: "if the people of the world were to find out that there was some alien life form that was going to attack the Earth approaching on Halley's Comet, then that knowledge would unite all peoples of the world."⁴⁹ Indeed, in Reagan's view, the "alien life form" had arrived on Earth, in the form of nuclear weapons.

⁴⁸ See Document No. 11. Raymond Garthoff flagged the Afghanistan discussion as "most significant" and credited Oberdorfer with digging out the story, see Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 245–246.

⁴⁹ Document No. 13.

This shared concern did produce some breakthrough proposals at Geneva, especially Gorbachev's embrace of 50 percent cuts in ballistic missiles where the USSR had a large numerical advantage (designed to compensate for Soviet deficits on missile accuracy and reliability). The CIA's Douglas MacEachin remarked years later, "Somebody asked me when did I think the Cold War was over. Intellectually, for me, it was November of 1985 in Geneva, when Gorbachev made his first 50 percent proposal. That was serious stuff."⁵⁰

Reagan went to Geneva still a believer in the Team B notion of a Soviet drive for world dominance, but also eager to talk. In a lengthy memo dictated to his secretary and shared only with a few staff before Geneva, Reagan described Gorbachev as "totally dedicated to traditional Soviet goals" including that "[t]hey would like to win by being so much better prepared [for war] we could be faced with a surrender or die ultimatum."⁵¹ Yet Reagan did not draw from that belief the rejection of dialogue that Team B and many members of his own administration consistently advocated. Reagan could hold two or more contradictory concepts simultaneously in his mind, in the same way that earlier in his career he could memorize two completely different roles in scripts for movies being shot in overlapping time periods, and still keep them straight, show up for filming on time, and never forget a line. Put a different way, Reagan was neither a deductive nor an inductive thinker, but an agglutinative thinker.⁵² In Matlock's words, "Once Reagan met Gorbachev [at Geneva], he did not need an intelligence officer to tell him whether he was a guy he could deal with. He felt it instinctively."⁵³

Shultz told Dobrynin in December 1985 that Geneva had been "a process of education of sorts" for the president. According to Shultz, "Reagan had [previously] viewed all Soviet statements as blatant propaganda designed simply to mislead the West ... but Reagan had changed his mind following his personal talks with Gorbachev, admitting that the Soviet leader had deep convictions of his own."⁵⁴ For Reagan, Geneva reinforced his sense of Soviet insecurity, especially with Gorbachev's repeated characterization of SDI as "space weapons" for first-strike purposes. Ironically, even though this was never in Reagan's conception, Gorbachev and other Soviet officials may have gotten this idea from the animated cartoons produced by U.S. television networks to illustrate the

⁵⁰ Douglas MacEachin quoted in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 185. Actually, Gorbachev first proposed the 50 percent cut in his September 12, 1985, letter, and Reagan seized on it in his October 31 response. See Ronald Reagan Library, NSC, Executive Secretariat, Head of State File, Box 39; reprinted in Reagan, *An American Life*, pp. 624–631.

⁵¹ Document No. 6. Jack Matlock devoted five pages to quotes, summary and analysis of the memo in *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 150–154, while Edmund Morris quotes two paragraphs in *Dutch*, pp. 543–544.

⁵² For a persuasive discussion of Reagan's thinking, including the "agglutinative" concept, see FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, especially pp. 57–58.

⁵³ Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 186.

⁵⁴ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 595.

hypothetical Strategic Defense Initiative, and by the advocacy organization High Frontier, which showed laser beams destroying Soviet missiles in their silos.⁵⁵

Reagan quickly responded to Gorbachev's concerns after Geneva with a letter proposing talks on reducing both sides' fears of first strikes (for the U.S., all those land-based Soviet ballistic missiles could only be a first-strike weapon; for the Soviets, the idea of spaced-based lasers set off primal fears of decapitation).⁵⁶ But Reagan's bureaucracy stalled on separating the components of SDI that could have offensive applications from the ones that would be more clearly defensive. In fact, the Pentagon resisted any limitations on SDI, and Weinberger always presented the issue to the president as Soviet attempts to strangle the baby in the cradle, rather than a differentiation between potentially offensive versus purely defensive weapons. So this initiative from Reagan went nowhere, when it perhaps could have led to the kind of confidence-building technology sharing that would have addressed Soviet concerns.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Gorbachev was in the middle of producing his own plan; he still saw Reagan as representing a military-industrial complex that was determined to start a new arms race, and he still had to deal with his own military-industrial *apparatus*, which would support nuclear abolition in part because they were sure the U.S. would reject it.

As Gorbachev recounted to his aides after Geneva, he had found Reagan to be a "dinosaur" in political terms, but also a nuclear abolitionist. He told Dobrynin on the airplane home that "Reagan had impressed him as a complex and contradictory person, sometimes frankly speaking his mind, as when he defended SDI, and sometimes, as usual, harping on propaganda dogmas in which he also believed. He was stubborn and very conservative. But still Gorbachev found it possible to establish contact with him and discovered a man who was not as hopeless as some believed."⁵⁸ To the American Communist leader Gus Hall in February 1986, Gorbachev described Reagan as "so loaded with stereotypes that it was difficult for him to accept reason" yet eager "to demonstrate to the American people that he'd made contact with the Soviet leadership, that the atmosphere had begun to improve"—"with the understanding that our countries are different but interdependent" because "[t]he alternative could be universal destruction."⁵⁹ Years later, top Gorbachev aide Anatoly Chernyaev commented that at Geneva, "a sparkle of trust twinkled between them."⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Apparently no longer available on the High Frontier website (<http://highfrontier.org/videos/#sthash.K1fUYM49.dpbs>) is the representative graphic from 2008 that labels the boost phase as "threat most vulnerable" and "get many RVs with one shot."

⁵⁶ Document No. 29 in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., "To the Geneva Summit: Perestroika and the Transformation of U.S.-Soviet Relations," *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 172*, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB172/index.htm

⁵⁷ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 244; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 689.

⁵⁸ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 592.

⁵⁹ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 52–53.

⁶⁰ Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 189.

Document No. 1: Record of Conversation between Thatcher and Reagan

December 22, 1984

There are dozens, perhaps even hundreds of extraordinary documents—only available after the end of the Cold War—that could serve as stage-setters for the dramatic interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union during the last superpower summits. But with the benefit of hindsight, one early conversation stands out more than any other, as the fullest premonition of what was to come—articulating the most important themes and disagreements that would arise during the subsequent summits. This remarkable, detailed memorandum of conversation records British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s first-ever visit to the presidential retreat at Camp David. Thatcher has come to debrief Reagan about her encounter in London with the rising Soviet star, Mikhail Gorbachev, a likely successor to the ill and aged Konstantin Chernenko at the top of the Soviet pyramid. Here, Thatcher expands on her earlier public comment upon meeting Gorbachev—“I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together”—and describes him to Reagan as an “unusual Russian... Much less constrained, more charming,” and not defensive in the usual Soviet way about human rights. Coming from the Tory “Iron Lady” who at the time is busy busting labor unions in Britain and denouncing communism around the world, such endorsements mattered to Reagan and had a pronounced effect on U.S. politics, especially on Reagan’s conservative base.

This memcon is also noteworthy for spelling out Reagan’s and Thatcher’s very different ideas about nuclear abolition and missile defense. Reagan directly declares his intentions regarding the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), including sharing any successful technology internationally, even with the Soviet Union, and abolishing nuclear weapons. In contrast, Thatcher vividly expresses her opposition to abolition (which “would make conventional, biological, or chemical war more likely”), her insistence on sticking to traditional deterrence, and her warning that the deployment of defensive systems could lead to an increase in Soviet offensive weapons to overcome those defenses, and thus actually diminish the West’s security. In the impending summits, Gorbachev would agree with Reagan about abolition, but would show even more anxiety than Thatcher about missile defense.

The interventions of Reagan’s aides in this conversation reveal strikingly the overestimates of Soviet strength so common among U.S. policymakers and the intelligence community in the early 1980s. National security adviser Robert McFarlane claims the Soviets are so far ahead in defensive systems that there is “strategic imbalance” and warns, “the potential for what is called break out is high.” Secretary of State George Shultz proclaims, “we cannot just sit back and let the Soviets build up a significant advantage in defensive systems”—as if such a thing was actually happening. Thatcher more realistically responds that if she were a Soviet leader, she would improve civil defense programs, not invest in missile defense. Yet, here in the discussions and afterward in the press statements, both she and Reagan look for ways to finesse their disagreements, so as not to appear publicly to disagree. Less than two years later, right after the Reykjavik summit, their differences would produce much more public drama.

Private Meeting: The President and Mrs. Thatcher, Plus Notetakers:

[...] Turning to Gorbachev's visit to the UK, *Mrs. Thatcher* said he was an unusual Russian in that he was much less constrained, more charming, open to discussion and debate, and did not stick to prepared notes. His wife [Raisa Gorbachev] was equally charming. The Prime Minister noted that she often says to herself the more charming the adversary, the more dangerous. Over the private lunch at Chequers, she had raised a number of pointed questions. She asked Gorbachev why the Soviet Union denies its people the right to emigrate. She had underlined that the West simply cannot understand or accept the Soviet policy of refusing people the right to leave. She contrasted the Soviet policy with the situation in the West, where many countries have had to stop people from coming in. Gorbachev replied that 89 percent of those who applied for permits to leave received them. Noting that she had no way to cross-check Gorbachev's statistics, she told the President that Gorbachev's claim clearly conflicted with information she receives from British Jewish groups. She commented that she had further suggested to Gorbachev that it was a sign of weakness to feel the need to keep one's people in.

Mrs. Thatcher contrasted Gorbachev with [Andrei] Gromyko, whom she observed would have sharply replied that emigration was an internal matter and not open for discussion. Gorbachev was not willing to debate the point, but he did allow her to discuss it without cutting her off. He also avoided the usual Soviet reaction of citing lengthy position of principle. The Prime Minister said she also questioned Gorbachev about the Soviets providing financial assistance to Britain's striking miners. Gorbachev replied "this has nothing to do with us". *Mrs. Thatcher*, however, replied that in a centrally controlled system like the Soviet Union there is no way funds could pass to British trade unions without government knowledge.

Mrs. Thatcher then expanded on what she called the government's total control of the Soviet economy. She had the impression that Gorbachev, like Andropov, was an advocate of economic reform and was willing to slacken government control over the Soviet economy. Gorbachev was clearly worried, said the Prime Minister, about the Soviet Union's poor economic performance. She had made a point to contrast Soviet control over its economy with the free societies in the West, where a number of governments have recently been elected because of their promise to restrict government interference in domestic economic affairs. Despite Gorbachev's professions about lessening government control, in reply to her question about how does a Russian factory decide how much to produce, he said, "we tell them".

Indicating she wished to reiterate what she had told the Vice President over breakfast, *Mrs. Thatcher* underlined that she had told Gorbachev there is no point in trying to divide Britain from the United States. This ploy will never succeed. Britain is part of the Western Alliance of free nations and the Soviets should drop any illusions about severing Europe or Great Britain from the United States. She also told Gorbachev that she and the President have known each other since long

before they assumed their current positions and dividing Europe from America is simply “not on”.

Gorbachev had made a special effort, said *the Prime Minister*, to cite [Konstantin] Chernenko’s name as a source of authority for his remarks. She then turned to what she had told Gorbachev about the Geneva talks. She emphasized that the Soviet Union and the West had entirely different ways of life and government. You don’t like ours, we don’t like yours. But it is in our common interest—indeed it is our duty—to avoid a conflict. We in the West, including the United States, accept that there can only be real security through military balance. She had underscored to Gorbachev that the Soviets must rid themselves of the belief that the U.S. is not sincere about disarmament. Gorbachev had replied that even public documents now show that the U.S. had targeted the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons in the 1950’s. Mrs. Thatcher said she had replied, “of course the U.S. had targeted the Soviet Union—who was preaching a political creed of world communism—what else did they expect?” And she had asked Gorbachev rhetorically if it wasn’t true that the Soviets targeted the U.S. during the same period and continued to do so now.

Mrs. Thatcher then contrasted the Soviet Union with the U.S. which had not used its great nuclear monopoly in the immediate post-war years to seek expansion. The U.S. is a former colony and knows what it is to be dominated by others. There is no other example in history of a great power using its military strength so sparingly to advance political goals. She had also emphasized to Gorbachev that the President is an honorable man who sincerely wants to improve relations with the Soviet Union. She was struck that when she mentioned that the President had sent a personal handwritten letter to [Leonid] Brezhnev shortly after assuming office, Gorbachev did not appear familiar with it. She made a point of telling Gorbachev that the President had put his heart and soul into his letter and after months of silence received only a pro forma typed reply. Again, Gorbachev did not react.

The President said he was pleased that, without exchanging a word in advance, Mrs. Thatcher had taken the same line with Gorbachev as he had followed in his September meeting with Gromyko. He had spoken about the communist desire to dominate the world. In reply, Gromyko suggested that the Soviets had acted with constraint since they could have, but did not send a mass of men into Western Europe after World War II. The President noted that in reply he had referred to Stalin’s remarks that there would have been no victory without the U.S. The President also referred Gromyko to quotations from Lenin and Stalin about world domination by communism. This time, Gromyko did not reply but quickly changed the subject.

Turning to the Geneva talks, *the President* said since the Soviets had fared so poorly in recent months in the propaganda battles associated with disarmament [sic] talks, he feared that they were looking at Geneva as mainly a propaganda forum. This is one of the reasons they launched such an attack against what has become commonly known as “Star Wars”. He emphasised [sic] that Star Wars was not his term and was clearly not what he had in mind. He continued that

there has never been a weapon for which another weapon against it had not been developed. Therefore, in view of all the advances in technology, he asked for a study of new defensive systems. Its aim would strictly be to strengthen deterrence. So far, initial research has been promising and, as he had stated many times, if it proves successful he would be willing to put this new technology into international hands. The President said we are not violating the ABM Treaty and have no intention of doing so. The new Strategic Defense Initiative also has a moral context. We must search for ways to build a more stable peace. Our goal is to reduce, and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. Chernenko now claims that this is also a Soviet goal. We have told them if they are really serious about reductions, we are ready. Gromyko had told him, said the President, that we cannot continue to sit on two mountains of weapons. The President said he replied, “let us then begin to lower and eventually eliminate these mountains.”

Mrs. Thatcher noted that Gorbachev had implied returning to Geneva was not an easy decision for the Soviets. He also indicated the Soviets would come to Geneva with serious proposals. The President replied, “we hope so.” She continued that she had emphasised to Gorbachev that Britain supports the U.S. SDI program and told him that it was not linked to a first strike strategy.

The President continued that he was simply amazed how closely *Mrs. Thatcher*’s remarks to Gorbachev had accorded with what he told Gromyko. He had made similar points, said the President, on immigration restrictions, underscoring that these restrictions make it especially difficult for the U.S.—with its many political groups with ties to the old country—to improve relations with the Soviets. He had made it clear to Gromyko that he could better deal with the Soviets with the support of the American people. The President then returned to his concern that the Soviets will use the Geneva talks primarily as a propaganda forum. He hoped, however, that the Soviets would treat these talks seriously; as he had told Gromyko the U.S. and the Soviet Union have a joint responsibility to see that war does not happen.

Mrs. Thatcher noted that she had a special interest in learning more details about the U.S. SDI program. Gorbachev had told her “tell your friend President Reagan not to go ahead with space weapons.” He suggested if you develop SDI the Russians would either develop their own, or more probably, develop new offensive systems superior to SDI. General Keegan (former head of USAF Intelligence), whom she had seen several times, had informed her about Soviet advances and she was interested in learning more about SDI. The President noted it was time to join the others at Laurel Lodge.

EXPANDED SESSION IN LAUREL LODGE

[...] *The Prime Minister* continued that Gorbachev had spent an inordinate amount of time on SDI. He had asked me to tell the President to stop the militarization of outer space. She had replied that Britain supports the U.S. SDI research effort and it was the Soviets who had been the first to develop an anti-satellite

capability. The West was also trying to keep up with Soviet research into laser weapons. She had told Gorbachev that there must be balance in research and the U.S. SDI research program must go ahead.

Saying he wished to extend Mrs. Thatcher a special Christmas welcome to Camp David, *the President* said he was pleased with Mrs. Thatcher's support for the often misunderstood SDI program. He noted that currently envisioned strategic defense weapons are not nuclear systems; many people have the mistaken impression that they are. General Eisenhower had spoken about how every advance in weapons of war is offset by another technological development. We owe it to future generations to see if we cannot develop a strategic defense that would move us away from this horrible threat of destroying the world. As he had told the Prime Minister in the private meeting, the initial research is promising, but we do not have any final answers.

Mrs. Thatcher again underlined that Britain backed the U.S. research program. She said she understood that we will not know for some time if a strategic defense system is truly feasible. If we reached a stage where production looked possible we would have some serious and difficult decisions to take. There are the ABM and outer space treaties. Future technological developments and possible countering strategies must also be considered. She recalled, for example, that with the advent of heat seeking missiles the general view had been that there was no defense against them, but this proved erroneous. Avoidance devices were developed. It was her impression from her talks with Gorbachev that the Soviets were following the same line of reasoning. They clearly fear U.S. technological prowess. However, Gorbachev suggested that the Soviets would either develop their own strategic defense system or add additional offensive systems.

We do not want our objective of increased security, opined *the Prime Minister*, to result in increased Soviet nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have served not only to prevent a nuclear war, but they have also given us forty years of unprecedented peace in Europe. It would be unwise, she continued, to abandon a deterrence system that has prevented both nuclear and conventional war. Moreover, if we ever reach the stage of abolishing all nuclear weapons, this would make conventional, biological, or chemical war more likely. Hitler won the race for the rocket; the U.S. won the race for the nuclear bomb. The technological struggle goes on, she observed. There are all sorts of decoys, jamming systems and technological developments such as making the missile boost phase even shorter. All these advances make crisis management more and more difficult.

Mrs. Thatcher said these comments reflect concerns. We have some real worries, especially about SDI's impact on deterrence. The wretched press has tried to make out that we have major differences. This is simply not true, but we do feel it is unwise to conclude where we will go on SDI, before the research program is completed. At the same time we need a sound research program, if we are to maintain a balanced relationship with the Soviets.

Mrs. Thatcher noted that the President said earlier that initial indications are that an SDI program is feasible. Mrs. Thatcher said she must admit that

personally she had some doubts. In the past, scientific genius had always developed a counter system. Even if an SDI system proved 95 percent successful—a significant success rate—over 60 million people would still die from those weapons that got through. She again emphasised her concern with any implication of dropping our successful nuclear deterrent strategy and stressed that it was important that we work out privately what we will say publicly about SDI. She said several points appear pertinent. We must emphasize that SDI is only a research program; and that our objective is both to maintain a military balance and to enhance, not weaken deterrence.

The President said we need to address the points Mrs. Thatcher had raised and to reach agreement on SDI, a program he called worth pursuing. He noted that experts continue to tell him that research is promising and SDI may be feasible. We have obviously not made a decision on production or deployment and these questions would have to be addressed at the appropriate time. We cannot and should not, however, continued the President, have to go on living under the threat of nuclear destruction. We must eliminate the threat posed by strategic nuclear weapons. My ultimate goal is to eliminate nuclear weapons. The Soviets are now beginning to echo this same view. He said he told Gromyko that the U.S. is not seeking superiority, but we will not let the Soviets achieve superiority. He recognized that the Soviets have great respect for our technology. They also must be concerned about our economic strength. It will be especially difficult for them to keep spending such vast sums on defense. Such spending is in neither of our interests.

The President continued that he also recognised the great losses the Soviets suffered in World War II—20 million or more—and accepted their obsession with security. But it doesn't make sense, as my predecessor did, to propose unilateral reductions, such as cancelling the B-1 bomber. Common sense tells us that one needs negotiating tools when bargaining with the Soviets, or anyone else for that matter. We in the West have great strength—Europe alone has four times the GNP of the Soviet Union. We must deal with the Soviets from a position of strength. But we also know that in a nuclear war there would be no winners.

Mrs. Thatcher interjected that this is why she had emphasized and praised the deterrence system that has worked so well for so many years. Strength is our best deterrence.

The President agreed and said he is trying to convince the Soviets that we mean them no harm. He often thought that the basic system in Russia had not changed fundamentally, i.e., that their current communist system is another form of the aristocratic system that ruled Russia under the Czar. Gandhi had once said that the Soviets believe more in survival than in communism.

Mrs. Thatcher replied that it is correct to emphasize military balance, not superiority. Balance gives us security. Making a specific reference to SDI, she said research contributes towards maintaining a military balance. We need to explain to our publics that SDI is only a research program, that it does not contravene any existing treaties and if we get to the development stage, many alternative

factors will have to be considered at that time. For example, the ABM Treaty may have to be renegotiated.

Secretary Shultz stressed our concern is that the current situation is not balanced. The Soviets have many more offensive nuclear systems than foreseen under Salt I. The defensive side is covered under the ABM Treaty, but we have essentially dropped the notion of deploying a defensive system around cities and bases. The Soviets, however, have deployed an ABM system around Moscow—that is permitted under the treaty—and now they are also devoting considerable resources toward the development of other defensive systems. For example, they have a large phased array radar under construction, which we believe is a treaty violation. The Soviets have positioned themselves to break out from the conditions imposed by the treaties. Their emphasis on defensive systems puts us in an unequal position. Our view is that there is an imbalance; our SDI research is designed to contribute to enhancing deterrence.

Saying she didn't wish to debate strategic theory, *Mrs. Thatcher* noted that some claim SDI would be an incentive for the Soviets to produce more offensive systems and could encourage the Soviets to launch a preemptive first strike. From our point of view, said *Mrs. Thatcher*, deterrence remains our fundamental objective. And like you, we are fearful of the Soviets finding an excuse to walk out of the Geneva talks.

Secretary Shultz interjected that we cannot just sit back and let the Soviets build up a significant advantage in defensive systems. *Mrs. Thatcher* said if she were a Soviet, she would take steps to improve my already significant civil defense program.

At the President's request, *National Security Advisor McFarlane* expanded on the U.S. SDI program. Calling *Mrs. Thatcher's* questions and criticisms thoughtful and well-reasoned, *McFarlane* underscored that her remarks are based on the assumption that offensive deterrence in its present form can and will endure. This may not be true. In recent years the character of Soviet offensive systems has changed dramatically; they are more mobile and carry increased warheads, making verification a near impossible task. The future suggests that the Soviets will rely far more on mobile systems, as well as cruise missiles.

McFarlane continued that our dilemma has been what to do to restore the strategic balance. The President has underway a significant strategic modernization program but this has encountered both moral and political difficulties, as evidenced by the M-X debate in Congress. The preferred course would be to reduce our offensive systems. As the President has stated, this is our goal and the President hopes ultimately to eliminate nuclear weapons. *McFarlane* observed that our current dilemma—one over which the President expressed concern several years ago—is our inability to match the Soviet offensive build up. This is why the President asked us to examine other alternatives. Emerging technologies suggest that a new defensive system may be feasible. This is a searching question: can you have an absolute defense against incoming missiles, whether they be nuclear, chemical, or biological?

Mrs. Thatcher wondered if a truly impervious system were possible. She asked, “is there any such thing as a perfect defense?” Could the Soviets simply not just overwhelm any defensive system with increased numbers of offensive systems?

Calling the Prime Minister’s questions good ones, *McFarlane* replied that we are concerned about nuclear deterrence becoming unstable and our goal is to strengthen deterrence. Given technological advances—there have been some remarkable technology developments—it is prudent and responsible for the President to undertake the SDI research effort.

Saying SDI as she understood it seemed to suggest inherent U.S. superiority, *Mrs. Thatcher* added she was not convinced of the need to deploy such a system, particularly if it could eventually be knocked out by other technological advances. [...]

[Source: *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109185>. Original source: *Ronald Reagan Library*.]

Document No. 2: Memorandum from Yakovlev to Gorbachev: “About Reagan”

March 12, 1985

The day after Gorbachev's assumption of power (and with Reagan's March 11 introductory letter in hand), the Soviet leader asked Aleksandr Yakovlev to write this memo, analyzing Reagan's positions on a variety of issues—a fascinating exercise both for the content of the memo and the rise to extraordinary influence on the part of the author. After a year's fellowship at Columbia University in New York, Yakovlev had served as a deputy director within the Central Committee for “propaganda and agitation” until he published a widely noted article in 1972 denouncing nationalist tendencies under the title “Against Anti-Historicism.” At that point, the Brezhnev system regurgitated Yakovlev and exiled him to Toronto as the USSR ambassador to Canada (Stalin likely would have shot him). As fate would have it, the Central Committee secretary for agriculture, Mikhail Gorbachev, visited Canada in 1983 and found a kindred soul in Yakovlev, whose ten years in a prosperous democracy had sharpened his critical stance. The two men agreed that the “primitive” Soviet system needed radical reform. When Gorbachev returned to Moscow, he used his influence to bring Yakovlev back as head of the prestigious Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Academy of Sciences, a leading intellectual breeding ground for new thinking. By July 1985, Gorbachev would nominate Yakovlev as a candidate member of the Politburo in charge of ideology; by 1986, Yakovlev would be a full member and in 1987 a full secretary of the Central Committee—rocket-style upward mobility that the reformer put to good use in sponsoring the flowering of glasnost. Notable for its non-ideological tone, this memo suggests that Reagan's invitation to meet was very much in the Soviet Union's national interest, and that Reagan's positions were far from clear-cut, indicating some potential for improving U.S.-Soviet relations. Yakovlev points out that after increasing military spending in his first term, Reagan now wanted to turn to high diplomacy, that he wanted to fulfill his dream of becoming a “great peacemaker president.” Ever sensitive to domestic political issues thanks to his experience in Canada, Yakovlev notes the issue of budget constraints and the need for Reagan to either reduce or justify defense spending, and suggests ways to enlist the Europeans in a revived “détente” initiative. Such analyses from Yakovlev would be all too rare—subsequent to this memo, Yakovlev would go on to focus on domestic political reform and glasnost rather than on foreign policy.

Starting positions—they are not so simple.

1. Everything points to the fact that Reagan is trying persistently to capture the initiative in international affairs, to create an image of America as a country that is purposefully striving to improve relations with the Soviet Union and to improve the global political climate.

He would like to solve a number of problems in the context of [his] dream about a “great peace-maker President” and “great America,” although currently the psychological situation is not in his favor.

2. Reagan outlined and partially carried out the plans to militarize America; and he has given practically everything that he had promised to the military industry, therefore, now he can move on to diplomacy “at the highest level,” which in any case would be a prestigious course that would raise [his] political stock, which is what Reagan needs right now.

3. He is constrained now by the budget deficit, which might lead to economic difficulties. This deficit has to be either *justified by an external threat, or decreased*.⁶¹

4. Notwithstanding the appearance of relative solidarity in NATO and among other allies, there is no unity, or it is not all that solid. The USA *is trying to hold on to the crest of a centripetal tendency and to prevent the development of a centrifugal tendency by all means*.

The invitation for a meeting should, obviously, be understood in this context. A lot of issues can be seen here: the aspiration *to confine our relations with the West to the Soviet-American framework* (the USA is watching its allies with concern); an awareness of the anti-war mood both in the Congress and outside of it; a desire to feel out the Soviet position on key international issues once again.

Undoubtedly, this action, apart from its political aims, carries significant propaganda content. He does not lose anything if we refuse to meet [with him] (“you see, I wanted to, but...”), just the same if the meeting is a failure (“the Russians are uncooperative, as always...”).

In other words, from Reagan’s point of view, his proposal is well thought-through, precisely calculated, and does not contain [any] political risk.

Conclusion: Meeting with Reagan is in the national interest of the Soviet Union. We should agree to it, but without haste. We should not help create an impression that it is Reagan, solely, who pushes the buttons of world development.

Goals of the meeting: a) to get a personal impression of the American leader; b) to give a clear signal that the USSR is genuinely prepared to negotiate, but only on the basis of strict reciprocity; c) to let Reagan know in a very

⁶¹ Throughout this document, the phrases are underlined in the original Russian version. [Editors]

straightforward form that the USSR will not let [anyone] manipulate it, and will not yield on [matters of] national interest; we should continue to point out in a delicate way that the world does not end with the USA, but at the same time not lose real opportunities in terms of improving relations with the USA, because in the next quarter century the USA will remain the strongest power in the world.

It would be hard to expect any unanticipated fundamental changes in American policy. And this is not only due to the anti-Communist dogmatism of Reagan himself; the harsh U.S. policy is dictated by *the character of the [current] transitional period for the United States—from its absolute dominance in the capitalist world, to a position of dominant partnership, and subsequently to relative equality.*

The painful nature of this process, even if one ignores the traditional geopolitical claims of the USA, is obvious: it will continue to affect [its] foreign policy for a long time.

It is precisely this *transitional period* that dictates that we should undertake a certain reorientation of our foreign policy in terms of gradually and consistently developing relations with *Western Europe, Japan, and China.*

However, this should not lead to decreased attention to U.S.-Soviet relations in their substance, but to the contrary—they should be given increased attention.

Timing. Possibly after the Congress [of the Communist Party]. It would be better [if it took place] after certain economic reforms or other practical initiatives and achievements, which would demonstrate the dynamism of our country. Practical actions are the best to persuade the Americans; they will become more cooperative.

Location. Not in the USA; some place in Europe.

Alternative. As mentioned above, we should use all possible factors of political pressure on the United States, and first among them all is the interest of the Europeans in a relaxation of tensions, which was clearly felt during the recent discussions in Moscow; [we should] confirm our position of initiative.

For that, we would need a powerful countermove.

For example, in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Helsinki Conference (August 1 of this year), we could put forward a proposal to hold a summit of heads of state, who put their signatures under the Final Act in the capital of Finland. By promoting this idea, we could focus attention on the need to introduce elements of trust into international relations and to revive the process of détente in the political as well as in the military sphere.

As a first step, this idea could be raised in a personal letter from the general secretary of the Central Committee to the president of the USA, noting that in Helsinki they could establish personal contact and exchange ideas about the timing and the general framework of a U.S.-Soviet summit.

Regardless of the American reaction, we could inform our allies about the step we took, and talk to them about conducting appropriate work with Western European countries. Political efforts in this direction would also enhance the work of the forthcoming session of the Political Consultative Committee of the

member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. And most importantly—not only would we have *confirmed our active approach to reviving the détente processes—but we would have also put our own base under the Soviet-American meeting at the highest level.*

March 12, 1985

A. Yakovlev.

[Source: *State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow. Yakovlev Collection, Fond 10063, Opis 1. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 3: Letter from Reagan to Gorbachev

April 30, 1985

From the very first letter that Reagan sent to Gorbachev on March 11, Reagan and Gorbachev became avid pen pals. In his first communication, Reagan invited Gorbachev to meet, and Gorbachev responded on March 24 with a long letter welcoming the idea of personal meetings and engaging Reagan across the spectrum of U.S.-Soviet relations. The letter below is a belated response, in which the U.S. president discusses the sensitive issue of Afghanistan, vowing that he is “prepared to work with you to move the region toward peace, if you desire.” Reagan also objects to Gorbachev’s unilateral April 7 announcement of a moratorium on deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe, since the Soviet deployment was largely complete while NATO’s was still underway. But the heart of the letter addresses Gorbachev’s opposition to SDI. Reagan mentions that he was struck by Gorbachev’s characterization of SDI as having “an offensive purpose for an attack on the Soviet Union. I can assure you that you are profoundly mistaken on this point.” Interestingly, Reagan tries to reassure Gorbachev by citing the necessity of “some years of further research” and “further years” before deployment. This back-and-forth on SDI would be a constant theme in the two leaders’ correspondence and discussions at the summits to come, but the consistency of Reagan’s position on this (in contrast to that of Pentagon advocates of “space dominance”), not only in his conversations with Gorbachev but with Thatcher and with his own staff, suggests Gorbachev had some reason to take the president at his word—which never happened on SDI.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

As I mentioned in my letter of April 4, delivered by Speaker O’Neill, I have given careful thought to your letter of March 24 and wish to take this opportunity to address the questions you raised and to mention others which I feel deserve your attention. Given the heavy responsibilities we both bear to preserve peace in the world and life on this planet, I am sure that you will agree that we must communicate with each other frankly and openly so that we can understand each other’s point of view clearly. I write in that spirit. [...]

One situation which has had a profoundly negative impact on our relations is the conflict in Afghanistan. Isn’t it long overdue to reach a political resolution of this tragic affair? I cannot believe that it is impossible to find a solution which protects the legitimate interests of all parties, that of the Afghan people to live in peace under a government of their own choosing, and that of the Soviet Union to ensure that its southern border is secure. We support the United Nations Secretary General’s effort to achieve a negotiated settlement, and would like to see a political solution that will deal equitably with the related issues of withdrawal of your troops to their homeland and guarantees of non-interference. I fear that your

present course will only lead to more bloodshed, but I want you to know that I am prepared to work with you to move the region toward peace, if you desire.

Above all, we must see to it that the conflict in Afghanistan does not expand. Pakistan is a trusted ally of the United States and I am sure you recognize the grave danger which would ensue from any political or military threats against that country.

Turning to another of your comments, I must confess that I am perplexed by what you meant by your observation that trust “will not be enhanced if, for example, one were to talk as if in two languages....” Of course, this is true. And, if I am to be candid, I would be compelled to admit that Soviet words and actions do not always seem to us to be speaking the same language. But I know that this is not what you intended to suggest. I also am sure that you did not intend to suggest that expressing our respective philosophies or our views of actions taken by the other is inconsistent with practical efforts to improve the relationship. For, after all, it has been the Party which you head which has always insisted not only on the right but indeed the duty to conduct what it calls an ideological struggle.

However this may be, your remarks highlight the need for us to act so as to bolster confidence rather than to undermine it. In this regard, I must tell you that I found the proposal you made publicly on April 7—and particularly the manner in which it was made—unhelpful. As for the substance of the proposal, I find no significant element in it which we have not made clear in the past is unacceptable to us. I will not burden this letter with a reiteration of the reasons, since I am certain your experts are well aware of them. I cannot help but wonder what the purpose could have been in presenting a proposal which is, in its essence, not only an old one, but one which was known to provide no basis for serious negotiation. Certainly, it does not foster a climate conducive to finding realistic solutions to difficult questions. Past experience suggests that the best way to solve such issues is to work them out privately.

This brings me to the negotiations which have begun in Geneva. They have not made the progress we had hoped. It may now be appropriate to give them the political impetus about which we both have spoken. Let me tell you frankly and directly how I view them.

First, the January agreement by our Foreign Ministers to begin new negotiations was a good one. The problem has not been the terms of reference on the basis of which our negotiators met, even though each side may in some instances interpret the wording of the joint statement somewhat differently in its application to specifics. The problem is, rather, that your negotiators have not yet begun to discuss concretely how we can translate our commitment to a radical reduction of nuclear arsenals into concrete, practical agreements.

A particular obstacle to progress has been the demand by Soviet negotiators that, in effect, the United States agree to ban research on advanced defensive systems before other topics are dealt with seriously. I hope that I have misunderstood the Soviet position on this point, because, if that is the Soviet position, no progress will be possible. For reasons we have explained repeatedly and in detail,

we see no way that a ban on research efforts can be verified. Indeed in Geneva, Foreign Minister Gromyko acknowledged the difficulty of verifying such a ban on research. Nor do we think such a ban would be in the interest of either of our countries. To hold the negotiations hostage to an impossible demand creates an insurmountable obstacle from the outset. I sincerely hope that this is not your intent, since it cannot be in the interest of either of our countries. In fact, it is inconsistent with your own actions—with the strategic defense you already deploy around Moscow and with your own major research program in strategic defense.

In this regard, I was struck by the characterization of our Strategic Defense Initiative which you made during your meeting with Speaker O'Neill's delegation—that this research program has an offensive purpose for an attack on the Soviet Union. I can assure you that you are profoundly mistaken on this point. The truth is precisely the opposite. We believe that it is important to explore the technical feasibility of defensive systems which might ultimately give all of us the means to protect our people more safely than do those we have at present, and to provide the means of moving to the total abolition of nuclear weapons, an objective on which we are agreed. I must ask you, how are we ever practically to achieve that noble aim if nations have no defense against the uncertainty that all nuclear weapons might not have been removed from world arsenals? Life provides no guarantee against some future madman getting his hands on nuclear weapons, the technology of which is already, unfortunately, far too widely known and knowledge of which cannot be erased from human minds. [...]

Of course, I recognize that, in theory, the sudden deployment of effective defenses by one side in a strategic environment characterized by large numbers of "first-strike" weapons could be considered as potentially threatening by the other side. Nevertheless, such a theoretical supposition has no basis in reality, at least so far as the United States is concerned. Our scientists tell me that the United States will require some years of further research to determine whether potentially effective defensive systems can be identified which are worthy of consideration for deployment. If some options should at some time in the future be identified, development of them by the United States could occur only following negotiations with other countries, including your own, and following thorough and open policy debates in the United States itself. And if the decision to deploy should be positive, then further years would pass until the systems could actually be deployed. So there is no possibility of a sudden, secretive, destabilizing move by the United States. During the research period our governments will have ample time to phase out systems which could pose a "first-strike" threat and to develop a common understanding regarding the place of possible new systems in a safer, more stable, arrangement. If such defensive systems are identified that would not be permitted by the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the United States intends to follow the procedures agreed upon at the time the Treaty was negotiated in 1972. In particular, Agreed Statement D attached to that Treaty calls upon the party developing a system based upon other physical principles to consult with the other party pursuant to Article XIII, with a

view to working out pertinent limitations which could be adopted by amendment to the Treaty pursuant to Article XIV. I presume that it continues to be the intention of the Soviet Union to abide by Agreed Statement D in the event the long-continuing Soviet program in research on directed energy weapons were to have favorable results.

I hope this discussion will assist you in joining me in a search for practical steps to invigorate the negotiations in Geneva. One approach which I believe holds promise would be for our negotiators on strategic and intermediate-range nuclear systems to intensify their efforts to agree on specific reductions in the numbers of existing and future forces, with particular attention to those each of us find most threatening, while the negotiators dealing with defensive and space weapons concentrate on measures which prevent the erosion of the ABM Treaty and strengthen the role that Treaty can play in preserving stability as we move toward a world without nuclear weapons. Proceeding in this fashion might avoid a fruitless debate on generalities and open the way to concrete, practical solutions which meet the concerns of both sides.

I believe we also should give new attention to other negotiations and discussions underway in the security and arms control field. We know that some progress has been made in the Stockholm Conference toward narrowing our differences. An agreement should be possible this year on the basis of the framework which we have discussed with your predecessors. Specifically, we are willing to consider the Soviet proposal for a declaration reaffirming the principle not to use force, if the Soviet Union is prepared to negotiate agreements which will give concrete new meaning to that principle. Unfortunately, the response of your representatives to this offer has not been encouraging up to now. I hope that we may soon see a more favorable attitude toward this idea and toward the confidence-building measures that we and our allies have proposed.

One pressing issue of concern to us both is the use of chemical weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war. This situation illustrates the importance of curbing the spread of chemical weapons, and I suggest that it might be useful in the near future for our experts to meet and examine ways in which we might cooperate on this topic. A verifiable complete global ban on these terrible weapons would provide a lasting solution, and I would ask you therefore to give further study to the draft treaty we have advanced in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. [...]

Finally, let me turn to an issue of great importance to me and to all Americans. As the Vice President informed you in Moscow, we believe strongly that strict observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Helsinki Final Act is an important element of our bilateral relationship. Last year we suggested that Ambassador Hartman meet periodically with Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko to discuss confidentially how we might achieve greater mutual understanding in this area. I am also prepared to appoint rapporteurs as you suggested to the Vice President, perhaps someone to join Ambassador Hartman in such meetings. Whatever procedures we ultimately establish, I hope we can agree to try, each in accord with his own legal structure, to resolve problems in

this area. If we can find a way to eliminate the conditions which give rise to public recrimination, we will have taken a giant step forward in creating an atmosphere conducive to solving many other problems.

I was glad to receive your views on a meeting between the two of us, and agree that major formal agreements are not necessary to justify one. I assume that you will get back in touch with me when you are ready to discuss time and place. I am pleased that arrangements have been made for Secretary Shultz to meet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Vienna next month, and hope that they will be able to move us toward solutions of the problems I have mentioned as well as others on the broad agenda before us.

As I stated at the outset, I have written you in candor. I believe that our heavy responsibilities require us to communicate directly and without guile or circumlocution. I hope you will give me your frank view of these questions and call to my attention any others which you consider require our personal involvement. I sincerely hope that we can use this correspondence to provide a new impetus to the whole range of efforts to build confidence and to solve the critical problems which have increased tension between our countries.

Sincerely,
Ronald Reagan [signed]

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library. Obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 4: CIA Intelligence Analysis: “Gorbachev, the New Broom”

June 1985

This eloquent report from the key analytical office at the CIA impressively captures the Andropovian rhetoric and energy of Gorbachev's first 100 days (March 11, 1985 to June), but mistakenly argues that the “new broom” will only apply to domestic and economic affairs, and thus misses the way in which the same process might come home to change Soviet foreign policy. The analysis positions Gorbachev as a “tough” hard-liner who would play “hard to get” on a summit with Reagan. Of course, some key indicators at the time support this analysis, such as the Soviet “surge” in Afghanistan that had started in 1984 and continued in Gorbachev's first year. But within a week of this paper, Gorbachev would kick upstairs the venerable Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, to the increasingly ceremonial role as chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (what the CIA mistakenly calls the “Presidency”—it was not actually equivalent to the American position). The whole section of this CIA paper speculating that timing of a summit is tied up in Soviet leadership politics is redacted by CIA. But later the paper does say “an early move by Moscow to arrange a summit cannot be ruled out”; and points to declining Gromyko influence. Ironically, the U.S. side agrees to Geneva as the location for a November summit on July 1, the same day that Gromyko finds out at the Soviet Politburo meeting that he won't be succeeded at the Foreign Ministry by his chosen deputy, Georgy Kornienko, but by Gorbachev's surprise choice, the Georgian party secretary Eduard Shevardnadze, a foreign policy rookie. So this CIA analysis is twice wrong, first that it would be a “setback” for Gorbachev if he does not become the “President,” and second, that Gorbachev's focus is on economics and domestic policy, not foreign, exactly at the moment that Gorbachev takes control of Soviet foreign policy.

SUMMARY

Gorbachev has demonstrated in his first 100 days that he is the most aggressive and activist Soviet leader since Khrushchev. He is willing to take controversial and even unpopular decisions—like the antialcohol campaign—and to break with recent precedent by criticizing the actions of his colleagues on the Politburo.

He has thrown down the gauntlet on issues as controversial as the allocation of investment, broadgauged management reform, and purging the system of incompetent and corrupt officials. The very insistence of his rhetoric allows little room for compromise or retreat.

Gorbachev is gambling that an attack on corruption and inefficiency, not radical reform, will turn the domestic situation around. While a risky course, his prospects for success should not be underestimated. Although his approach is controversial,

his near term prospects look good. Unlike his immediate predecessors, he has already managed to firm up his base of support in the Politburo and Secretariat. He can also count on some support from middle level officials of the bureaucracy who were frustrated by the stagnation of the Brezhnev era. The public as well has responded favorably to his style, judging by initial reaction filtering back through Western sources. His aggressiveness has placed the opposition on the defensive. His opponents are probably biding their time hoping he makes a major misstep.

Gorbachev's Style

Gorbachev has moved to draw a sharp contrast in style to his recent predecessors, who treated the bureaucracy gingerly and approached change cautiously. Brezhnev and Chernenko voiced concern about the deepening economic and morale problems in the country, but they were not prepared to confront the bureaucracies standing in the way of solutions. Brezhnev's solicitous attitude toward the bureaucracy limited the power of his office as officials came to believe they had lifetime tenure. Andropov moved to break this mold, but he was handicapped by his poor health and the lingering presence of Brezhnevites, including Chernenko and Premier Tikhonov. Learning from Andropov's experience, Gorbachev has consciously created an environment of urgency and made clear he intends to confront problems.

Gorbachev's populist style has not been seen since Khrushchev's frequent forays among the public and bare knuckles approach to dealing with the bureaucracy:

- He has visited factories in Moscow and Leningrad and found other opportunities to rub shoulders with workers in an effort to burnish his image as a man of the people. Soviet television has highlighted his easy give-and-take with ordinary citizens.
- He is carefully managing public relations. [Excised lines]
- Gorbachev has also moved his wife Raisa into the spotlight. She has appeared in the Soviet press and on television, [Excised lines].

While these traits mark Gorbachev as an unconventional Soviet politician, it is his no-holds-barred approach to confronting chronic domestic problems that underscores his new style as a leader. Gorbachev may feel that an aggressive approach is essential if he is to avoid getting bogged down like Andropov. A wide spectrum of Soviet officials complained of drift and corruption under Brezhnev and became discouraged when Andropov's ill health caused his initiatives to lose momentum. They provide a well-spring of potential support for Gorbachev's approach:

- He has instituted a sweeping crackdown on the deep-rooted problem of alcoholism, [Excised sentence].
- He criticized his Politburo colleagues in public during his visit to Leningrad, terming their recent decision on the allocation of land for pri-

vate plots inadequate and dismissing objections apparently raised by his colleagues.

- He has assailed ministers by name for lack of innovation, laziness, and poor management and has strongly implied that they will be removed. He has attacked the complacent attitude toward corruption within the party bureaucracy and called for promotion of younger and more competent officials at all levels. While such rhetoric is not new in itself, he has already underscored his intention to back up his tough rhetoric with dismissals by sacking some middle-level officials.
- [Excised bullet point]

Gorbachev has made it clear that he believes his policies are justified by the growing foreign and domestic problems facing the USSR:

- He has studded his speeches with language that evokes the image of a crisis, and suggested that the USSR is now at a turning point. [Excised line] He has decided to raise Russian national consciousness and to impose “super-enforcement” of order and discipline.
- At the April Central Committee plenum, he was sharply critical of the economic laxity under Brezhnev and the failure to follow through on decisions which had been taken by the leadership.
- In his speech to the S&T conference in early June, he warned that accelerated economic growth was an imperative due to the need to sustain current levels of consumption while making the investments in defense required by current international tensions.

Consolidating Power

Gorbachev is using time honored methods for building his power, advancing his allies into key leadership positions, but he is off to a faster start than any of his recent predecessors. More changes are likely soon:

- By advancing three allies to full Politburo membership in April he has probably achieved a working majority on most issues.
- The designation of Yegor Ligachev—one of the three promoted—as unofficial “second secretary” isolated his major rival, Secretary Grigoriy Romanov, who has been nearly invisible politically. [Excised lines]
- KGB boss Chebrikov—who was also promoted—appears to be another close ally, giving the General Secretary an important advantage in exerting political pressure against would-be Politburo opponents, most of whom are tainted by corruption.
- Gorbachev also placed a younger protégé in charge of the department that oversees personnel appointments, further consolidating his control over personnel policy and setting the groundwork for potentially sweeping

personnel changes preceding next February's party congress. He is off to a fast pace in replacing his opponents in the bureaucracy. He has retired one deputy premier and three ministers, and named nine new regional party bosses and three new Central Committee department heads.

Domestic Strategy

Using his strong political position, Gorbachev's first priority is to push his domestic economic program. While some Soviet officials have indicated he is sympathetic to the use of pragmatic methods, including tapping private initiative, his statements and actions underscore his overall commitment to the current economic system and his determination to make it work better. Having acknowledged the gravity of the economic problem, Gorbachev exudes an optimism that he and his team can eliminate waste, tighten discipline, increase the quality and quantity of production, and accelerate economic growth. While expressing great pride in the historical accomplishments of central planning, he has sharply criticized its recent performance, and called for "revolutionary" changes in the way the system works. [...]

Foreign Policy

Gorbachev's impact on foreign policy has so far been mostly stylistic. He has revealed no urgent agenda to match his determination to accelerate economic growth at home. Some of his gambits—like the INF moratorium [sic]—are stable leftovers from his predecessor. His immediate goal has apparently been to demonstrate to both allies and adversaries that there is now a strong and active leader in the Kremlin. Despite the press of domestic business, Gorbachev has received a steady stream of European and Third World leaders. He has been more activist than his immediate predecessors and will reportedly embark soon on a vigorous schedule [sic] of personal diplomacy and foreign trips. He is slated to travel to Paris in October for meetings with Mitterrand and he may visit India later this year.

Although he has not yet made any serious new initiative toward the US, he has already made his presence felt on Soviet policy. He reportedly ratified the return to the bargaining table in Geneva even before Chernenko's death in March. He softened Soviet conditions for a summit with President Reagan soon after entering office. Since then, he has apparently sanctioned the recent expansion of bilateral exchanges and met with several US delegations.

In public statements and private discussions, however, Gorbachev is clearly intent on presenting [excised words] a tough hardline image abroad and convincing American policymakers that bilateral relations will improve only if US policy changes. He and his colleagues evidently do not believe an early improvement in relations is likely. [...]

[Source: Central Intelligence Agency, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 5: Record of Main Content of Conversation between Gorbachev and U.S. Senate Delegation

September 3, 1985

Two months before his first summit with Reagan, Gorbachev meets with an eight-member delegation of U.S. Senators, including senior members of both the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees. The Soviet leader seeks to create the impression of a tough negotiator as well as a leader who intends to change U.S.-Soviet relations from confrontation to cooperation. Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) responds to Gorbachev's assertive speech along similar lines, saying that he heard a lot of "denials without argumentation," but also assuring the Soviet leader of the Senate's interest in his new ideas and initiatives. Paradoxically, while the more liberal Byrd shows skepticism, the normally hard-line Strom Thurmond (R-SC) assumes a different tone, emphasizing respect for the Soviet Union as "one of the two great countries" and an ally in World War II—exactly what Gorbachev wants to hear. Thurmond thinks that Gorbachev and Reagan "have something in common" and predicts that with Reagan, Gorbachev "will achieve important results in the name of peace." Other Senators present are Sam Nunn (D-GA), Claiborne Pell (D-CT), John Warner (R-VA), Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), and George Mitchell (D-ME).

Gorbachev. Several months ago I spoke with Congressman O'Neil. I told him: the Soviet leadership has the political will to normalize and improve our relations. We are ready to act. However, because a relationship is a bilateral issue, success depends on both sides. I would like to repeat—nothing has changed in our position since then. The Soviet leadership is confident that notwithstanding the deep differences that exist between us—differences in [our] assessments of the situation—we cannot allow ourselves to bring our relations to a confrontation. The logic of history itself has so determined that the USSR and the USA are the biggest countries with great economic and military potential. They cannot envision the future of their relations other than within some sort of cooperative framework. Any other approach would be short-sighted, [and] would not correspond to the interests of our peoples.

The period, in which we live, is characterized by the fast progress of scientific-technological revolution. In the political realm we all should act more energetically, actively, so that we do not lose time for achieving an agreement. It is difficult now already. But we can still sit at the table, discuss everything, reverse the arms race, and return the relationship back to a normal course. Later it will become even more difficult.

One has to be direct, methods of political pressure—if they were applied—will not give any profit to your policy. You cannot scare us, put us on our knees.

I assure you. But is this the solution? We have to search for a different solution—a way toward normalization of our relations. I would like to call the American side to look forward while extracting lessons from the past and from the present situation.

Senator Byrd. We are happy to meet with you. Let me pass to you the letter from the president of the United States and his best wishes.

Gorbachev. I thank [him] for the best wishes, [and] for the letter, which I will read carefully. (He reads the letter, which contains wishes to continue the dialogue, exchange of opinions, to put relations on a normal course and a request to receive R. Byrd).

Good letter. If, in the next stage, we succeed in deepening the dialogue, ensuring a deeper understanding of each other's points of view, that would be a shift. I hope that at the summit in Geneva we succeed in doing business in a constructive way. It is very important that practical policy grows out of these first considerations. And we have difficulties here. We need to learn, even at this stage, to build relations in such a way that they would contribute to the improvement of the overall climate.

Senator Byrd. The president is sincere and serious. He would be glad to hear your assessment, your opinion that we need dialogue. We should debate and achieve [our] goals. The president asked to pass to you his respect and best wishes. He is looking forward to the summit with interest.

Gorbachev. I thank the president. We should use the opportunity of the summit in order to take real steps to improve our relations, so that the summit brings satisfaction not only to our peoples but also to people of other countries.

One of the reasons why I dwelled so substantially on the problems of our relations is that the summit has to be defended. We know that many people speak against it, even though it is irresponsible. There are many groups in your public, there is the Congress. But everybody must understand—we cannot live in the conditions in which we live today. We have to calm down the hawks, because they start from [their] narrow interests, not from the interests of the people.

Our joint obligation is to prepare the summit in such a way so as to improve the relations. And here we hope for the wisdom of President Ronald Reagan.

Senator Byrd. The Senate wants to make its own contribution to the development of our relations. Our delegation includes representatives of both parties.

Gorbachev. I am aware of this.

Senator Byrd. Now I will read my statement, and then others will read theirs. [...]

What unites us? 150 years ago in his book *Democracy in America* Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about two great nations, which grew unnoticed, but each of which is marked by the heavens' will, each affect the fates of the world. He spoke about America, the character of which he knew very well, and about Russia. Nobody will lose from cooperation between our countries, [and] everybody will win.

You have a historic opportunity. Your tasks are inspirational. The issues facing us are enormous. Today the time has come to use this opportunity that opened to us and to resolve these issues.

Gorbachev. I have contradictory impressions from what you just said. I understand that you had to say all that, to present all your complaints, so to speak. I believe your colleagues will be happy with your speech. You presented a broad register of political problems. May your colleagues in Washington take my opinion into account—you expressed yourself fully and comprehensively. However, sincerely speaking, I have not heard much new there.

On the one hand, Congress is in favor of improving relations between our countries. This is the starting point. And so we could talk about what could be done to achieve that, what the United States could do, and what the USSR [could do]. Because the process of improving relations is mutual in character.

[...]

I would end with the following. The same thing that I said after reading President R. Reagan's letter. We are in favor of putting our relations on a constructive course. Let us then even out our policies since we have an agreement on this on both sides. Neither you nor we are prosecutors or judges. We understand our responsibility, we are in favor of concrete relations, [we are in favor of] necessary compromises. [We are] for different approaches than those that still characterize our relations [today].

It is not only the Soviet Union that has to change—although I am not ruling out a possibility of new steps on our part. The United States has to change as well, maybe even more so than the Soviet Union.

Our time is running out. I wish you a good rest of your trip. I would like to hope that the future will not bring us the worst, that improvement of our relations is possible. We have great opportunities for cooperation. Its development would be in your and in our interests. I am talking about the economic, scientific-technological and the cultural spheres. Each of us has to bear in mind: each of our peoples has their own way of life, and we cannot impose our ways in another country. If we [here] started to discuss how the American people should live, it would mean mistrust and disrespect toward it. But if we accept the rights and traditions of the United States, then you should accept the same for the Soviet people. Because it has an even longer, not a shorter, history than the American people.

Senator Byrd. We came from far away to be here. You said that you did not see much new in my speech. I am disappointed. But from your side, I heard a lot of pure denials without argumentation.

What's new is that you heard positive assurances about the feelings of the Senate and the people of the United States. By the Constitution, the Senate does not conduct negotiations. But ratification of treaties requires two-thirds of Senators' votes. Senate does not automatically ratify what the president says. One can always hear something new during [Senate] discussions.

I am glad to hear that you said that you agree to do business in a new way. We heard the words of the new leader of this country. I would be ready to travel even greater distances to hear more. You said what you considered necessary. My other colleagues would also like to say something.

Senator Thurmond. I congratulate Senator Byrd. He and I are from different parties—Democratic and Republican. We respect you and your country as one of the two great powers. You are the most capable leader of the USSR since World War II. Our leadership can see that you have new ideas, new approaches to world politics, new hopes, and new faith in the possibility of improving relations with the United States.

Gorbachev. Yes, this is so.

Senator Thurmond. We have and we will have disagreements. They can be resolved if [we] could resolve the problems of Afghanistan, Angola and Ethiopia. After all, we fought together in the last war. You and I were young then. [...]

Gorbachev. Yes, I was 13–14 years old then. I saw some terrible sights. Because the front there was shifting—back and forth. All this is forever in my memory.

Senator Thurmond. I took part in the war, participated in the meeting with your soldiers in Germany. Our countries can ensure peace. We feel respect for you. And we do not want to change your system. Neither do we want to achieve superiority in the military sphere.

Gorbachev. This is a significant statement.

Senator Thurmond. The summit gives [us] a great opportunity. I am confident that you and the president will be able to come to agreement on many issues. If you agree on reducing armaments, then other issues will be resolved too. It is good for us to meet. Reagan is firm but also fair. He defends America, [he] wants it to be strong, but not for aggression, but for peace. I am confident that you will like him. You and he have something in common. And I think we will get closer to peace. Reagan is a man of peace. I meet with him twice a week. I predict—you will achieve important results in the name of peace with him.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 6: Memorandum Dictated by Reagan: “Gorbachev”

November, 1985

NSC staff member Jack Matlock wrote the cover memo on this document as he handed off his files to his successor, Fritz Ermarth, upon leaving the White House to become ambassador to Moscow at the end of December 1986. Matlock told Ermarth: “[t]his is a revealing, but highly sensitive paper. It was dictated by the President last year a few weeks before the Geneva meeting (the corrections are also his). It provides excellent insight into his thinking re summitry and dealing with the Soviets.” Three remarkable passages are worth noting. First, Reagan himself amended his statement that the Soviets were planning a war to say only that Moscow wanted to be so much better prepared than the U.S. “we could be faced with a surrender or die ultimatum.” Second, Reagan contrasts those who argued “that no agreement with the Soviets is worth the time, trouble or paper it’s written on” with those “so hungry for an agreement of any kind that they would advise major concessions.” The first batch, of course, included many of his own senior advisers, such as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. For himself, Reagan says, “any agreement must be in the long-term interest of the United States,” then he adds in longhand “of our allies.” The third striking passage on “another important subject for discussion and even negotiation” has Reagan writing, “I’m sorry we are somewhat publicly on record about human rights. Front page stories that we are banging away at them on their human rights abuses will get us some cheers from the bleachers but it won’t help those who are being abused.” The document is a fascinating insight into Reagan’s own, quite complex views about the Soviet Union just as the series of summits that would end the Cold War is about to get underway.

I believe Gorbachev is a highly intelligent leader totally dedicated to traditional Soviet goals. He will be a formidable negotiator and will try to make Soviet foreign and military policy more effective.

He is (as are all Soviet General Secretaries) dependent on the Soviet-Communist hierarchy and will be out to prove to them his strength and dedication to Soviet traditional goals.

If he really seeks an arms control agreement, it will only be because he wants to reduce the burden of defense spending that is stagnating the Soviet economy. This could contribute to his opposition to our SDI. He doesn’t want to face the cost of competing with us. But another major reason is because the USSR’s military planning differs from ours. We generalize and plan in a kind of defensive pattern—how must we be able to cope with various contingencies worldwide. On the other hand, our recent PFIAB study makes it plain the Soviets are planning a war. They would like to win without it and their chances of doing that depend on being so prepared we could be faced with a surrender or die ultimatum. Thus any

new move on our part, such as SDI, forces them to revamp, and change their plan at great cost.

He doesn't want to undertake any new adventures but will be stubborn and tough about holding what he has. His major goal will continue to be weaning our European friends away from us. That means making us look like the threat to peace while he appears to be a reasonable man of peace out to reduce tensions between us. But if he has to make a choice, then he will opt for demonstrating to his own hierarchy that he is a strong leader.

In the world of P.R. we are faced with two domestic elements. One argues that no agreement with the Soviets is worth the time, trouble or paper it's written on so we should dig in our heels and say "nyet" to any concession. On the other side are those so hungry for an agreement of any kind that they would advise major concessions because a successful summit requires that.

My own view is that any agreement must be in the long-term interest of the United States. We'll sign no other kind. In a way, the Summit will be viewed generally as a success because we've met, shaken hands and been civil to each other. It can also be a success if we fail to arrive at an arms agreement because I stubbornly held out for what I believed was right for our country.

What are some of their needs and priorities? Well, I believe they hunger for some trade and technology transfers. There is no question but that we have a tremendous advantage on that front. Now I know some on our side don't like linking trade to political conduct; they believe peaceful trade is worthwhile all on its [sic] own. Well, I happen to think that trade is for us a major bargaining chip. We shouldn't give it away. But how about just hanging back until we get some of the things we want instead of giving consideration up front to what they want?

On another important subject for discussion and even negotiation, I'm sorry we are somewhat publicly on record about human rights. Front page stories that we are banging away at them on their human rights abuses will get us some cheers from the bleachers but it won't help those who are being abused. Indeed, it could wind up hurting them.

Let me quote a remark by Richard Nixon, talking about the 1972 Summit. He had been importuned by Jewish leaders before going to Moscow that he should get agreement on liberalizing Jewish immigration before making any agreements on trade, arms control or whatever. Here are his own words; "I did not follow this advice. After we had reached agreement on arms control and trade and other items they wanted, I took Brezhnev aside and told him that in order to get Congressional approval for those agreements which required it, it would be very helpful if he could act positively on the Jewish emigration front. An indication of the success of this policy is that in 1968, the year before I took office, only 600 Jews were allowed to emigrate. In 1972 after our Summit meeting, the number rose to 35,000. In 1973, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was passed which made Jewish emigration a public condition for most favored nations treatment. That year, the number of Jews allowed to emigrate was cut in half and today the

number is down to a trickle.” Then he added a line pertinent to our upcoming Summit. He expressed optimism that I might accomplish what he did in 1972, but only if I didn’t force Gorbachev to eat crow and embarrass him publicly. We must always remember our main goal and his need to show his strength to the Soviet gang back in the Kremlin. Let’s not limit the area where he can do that to those things that have to do with aggression [sic] outside the Soviet Union.

To those who believe Arms Control must be the goal as an end in itself with no connection to regional issues, let us ask if SALT I in 1972 wasn’t possible because the year before tensions in Central Europe were eased by the Berlin agreement? Conversely did SALT II fail of ratification on it’s [sic] own or did the invasion of Afghanistan have something to do with it?

They should be told in the coming meeting that Congressional approval on trade or arms control or whatever else they want will be difficult if not impossible to get if they continue to support their clients in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

Those who think the Summit can be made to look successful if we get agreements on cultural exchanges, the consulate we want, fishing and trade matters are dealing with window dressing. Yes they can be useful but they must be viewed as just trimming for the main events which are the security issues like arms control, the regional areas of conflict and the prevalent suspicion and hostility between us. Indeed those trimmings could be harmful when used by some as evidence that all our concerns about national security were no longer pertinent. The target of their self-generated euphoria would, of course, be defense spending. So let me add here; another of our goals probably stated to Gorbachev in private should be that failure to come to a solid, verifiable arms reduction agreement will leave no alternative except an arms race and there is no way that we will allow them to win such a race.

Let us agree this is the first of meetings to follow. That in itself will give an aura of success. We will have set up a process to avoid war in settling our differences in the future. Maybe we should settle on early 1987 as the next meeting time and maybe we should discuss offering that it be in Moscow. He can come back here in 1988.

With regard to a communique that is more language than substance—a frank statement of where we agreed and where we disagree—is something for us to discuss. But let there be no talk of winners and losers. Even if we think we won, to say so would set us back in view of their inherent inferiority complex.

And so we take leave of historic Geneva and I get the h—I out of there and head for the ranch.

Happy Thanksgiving Comrades!

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, Jack Matlock Files, Box 27, File Folder: Important History Pre-1987 [material for Fritz Ermarth] 3/4. Released through FOIA F06-114/8.]

Document No. 7: CIA Paper: “Sharing SDI Technology with the Soviets”

November 1, 1985

This remarkable CIA paper demonstrates how serious Ronald Reagan was about his repeated offers to share SDI with the Soviets—so much so that his CIA director, William Casey, felt compelled to order his agency to produce an options paper on the subject. Sent by Casey to fellow hard-liner Caspar Weinberger, the secretary of defense, the cover note refers to the fact that President Reagan continues to talk about sharing. The bureaucratic address of this memo raises an interesting question about who else within the U.S. structure saw it, because Weinberger would be the last to agree to such activities; in fact, the Pentagon would be the ultimate holdout against on-site verification measures for arms control even after the Soviets under Gorbachev agreed to spot inspections. And the paper describes actual models for sharing SDI, such as the Apollo-Soyuz space program cooperation, about which the CIA claims the “Soviets probably got [the] better deal (90–10, their favor), even though we did not share our best, most advanced technology.” The paper suggests the U.S. would gain from access to Soviet laboratories given suspicions about Soviet advances (the U.S. would find out the Soviets were actually far behind). Perhaps only the CIA and the Pentagon had copies of this paper, because these specifics would not show up in the talking points at the Geneva summit; and one wonders what might have happened if Gorbachev had heard about these options. Not appreciating the seriousness of the Reagan approach, Gorbachev would miss the opportunity for challenging the U.S. to deliver on sharing SDI—not at Geneva, and not even after the July 1986 Reagan letter that would propose an actual treaty to ratify the offer.

SHARING SDI TECHNOLOGY WITH THE SOVIETS

- Four distinct levels of co-operation possible (details below):
 - 1) “Open laboratories”
 - 2) Periodic meetings of a joint US-Soviet working group
 - 3) Permanent sitting US-Soviet working groups
 - 4) Joint control of deployed systems
- *Open Labs*: Would permit visits to each other’s SDI research centers. Our own labs (such as Livermore) are already visited by Soviet and other foreign scientists; we, however, do not get comparable access to Soviet facilities. Several ways to implement an “open labs” proposal:
 - Exchange of visits by scientists.
 - Exchange of *personnel* for specified periods of time.
 - Jointly-operated *laboratories*, specially set up.
 - Jointly-run R&D *programs* at established labs.

- *Periodic meetings of a joint US-Soviet working group*: Would meet on a regular basis (2–3 times a year), functioning much like the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) which was established following the first SALT agreements. Could be used to:
 - Discuss transition to defensive regime.
 - Discuss progress in research.
 - Raise concerns about developments viewed as threatening.
- *Permanent sitting US-Soviet working group(s)*: Would involve a newly-established permanent bilateral institution, which could:
 - Meet in one country or another, in both simultaneously, or in a neutral third country.
 - Be staffed by both US and Soviet political, military, and scientific personnel.
 - Provide a framework for continuing inspection of research centers, test facilities.
- *Joint Control of Deployed Systems*: Could encompass a variety of possible arrangements, including jointly-manned control complexes. Could also include participation by third parties.
 - Unlike first three options, which could be put into effect in near-term, and extend through R&D phases of SDI, this option applies only to a later time frame (10–15 years hence).
- *Models for Possible US-Soviet Cooperation on SDI*:
 - *NORAD*: US-Canadian, fully-integrated joint command: the forces and equipment that make it up are drawn from both countries; operations are conducted jointly; the Commander-in-Chief reports to the chief executives of both Canada and the US, and intelligence is shared at the command on a daily basis. (See Attachment A).
 - *Apollo-Soyuz Test Program*: Officially begun after 1972 summit meeting. NASA took lead, had prime responsibility for the US, working directly with Soviet counterparts in Academy of Sciences. State played backseat role. Soviets had access to NASA's system for program documentation, training, technology and industrial support. US given more limited access to Soviet facilities (See Attachment B).
 - *US-Soviet Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreements*: Twelve separate agreements resulted from 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev summit, covering broad spectrum of S&T. Administered by many USG agencies, with weak coordination. Soviets emphasized technology exchange, US sought to focus on scientific exchange to minimize risk of technology transfer. (See Attachment C).
 - *“Risk Reduction Centers”*: Senators Nunn and Warner have proposed creation of these centers in Washington and Moscow; *they do not currently exist*, so we have no experience with this sort of arrangement. Functions could include exchange of information, administrative support for high-level meetings, annual meetings to review operations. (See Attachment D).

- Of these, Apollo-Soyuz probably provides best model for next 5-10 years, during the technology development phase of SDI program.
 - Example of high-technology sharing program involving real hardware. Soviets probably got better deal (90–10, their favor), even though we did *not* share our best, most advanced space technology.
 - Political success for both sides (more so for Soviets).
 - Soviets still cite as a model for future cooperation in space.
- US offers to share technology with the Soviets are not unprecedented (See Attachment E).
 - Baruch Plan (1946): proposal to put virtually all nuclear activity under the aegis of an international authority. Rejected by Soviets, who went on to develop their own atomic weapons.
 - “Atoms for Peace” (1952): Eisenhower proposal which evolved into International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which monitors (with mixed results) production and movement of nuclear materials in order to prevent their diversion to military purposes.
 - “Open Skies” (1955): proposal by Eisenhower at Summit with Khrushchev, in advance of U-2 maiden flight, to exchange blueprints of military bases and allow reciprocal overflights without interference. Russians dismissed as “a bald espionage plot.”
- Tactical considerations:
 - Proposals could be linked to previous proposals for *on-site inspection*; in this case, though, we are not just verifying that there is no illegal activity going on.
 - Could also be linked to Canadian and French proposals for *international verification* of arms control (e.g. “PAXSAT”).
 - Could tie “open labs” plan for SDI technology to proposals for *renewed cooperation in space*. High-level Soviet scientists have been pushing idea of joint space ventures (See Attachment F).
 - One approach might be to *turn tables on the Soviets*: Ask them what they need from us to convince them we are serious about SDI technology sharing.
- Other thoughts:
 - We will have to deal with the apparent disconnect between SDI technology sharing and COCOM controls, which could create problems with the Allies.
 - [Excised paragraph]
 - Problems of monitoring and verification will still exist.

[Source: U.S. Defense Department, obtained through FOIA 05-F-1534 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 8: Memorandum from McFarlane to the President: “Papers on the Soviet Union: Gorbachev and His Geneva Agenda”

November 12, 1985

This cover memo for President Reagan from National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane summarizes and attaches the last two in a series of papers initiated by NSC staffer Jack Matlock to give Reagan a kind of “Soviet Union 101” course, teaching him about the Soviets prior to the first summit at Geneva. McFarlane, Matlock, and even the President himself had recognized what Matlock delicately calls “the president’s spotty command of historical facts” and “serious gaps in his knowledge of our adversary.”⁶² The series started in June 1985 when Matlock asked the State Department’s Intelligence bureau (headed then by Morton Abramowitz) and the CIA’s deputy director for intelligence, Robert Gates, to assign their best analysts to 21 topics culminating with these two papers, for which they would get individual credit. The first one, on Gorbachev “The Man,” does not list an author, so the likely drafter was Matlock himself. It is a vivid presentation full of bullet points and insightful phrases describing, for example, Gorbachev’s “unorthodox charismatic leadership style”; and the document original shows that Reagan underlined parts of almost every paragraph. The second paper, on Gorbachev’s likely agenda for the summit, is by the CIA’s Lawrence Modisett, and though drier in tone, still attracted some underlining by Reagan. While largely on point and even prescient about some of Gorbachev’s intentions, the Modisett paper—and the summary McFarlane memo—are more revealing of Washington’s thinking than Moscow’s. Yes, Gorbachev’s expectations were low and he would seek to explore Reagan’s personal commitment to improving relations. But there is nothing here about the nascent new thinking in Moscow, or the debates there that would lead to Gorbachev’s national security doctrine of “sufficiency” rather than “parity,” or the possibility that Gorbachev would seek an arms race in reverse. There is nothing here to explain the Soviet phobia about missile defense, the “militarization of space” about which Reagan would hear so much at Geneva. There is nothing here to predict the actual Soviet maximum goal in Geneva, as reported later by Anatoly Dobrynin, of getting a commitment from the U.S. that nuclear war should never be fought. Instead, the paper leads with the first paragraph’s expressed concern to “sustain funding” in the U.S. Congress for the defense budget.

You have previously read seven groups of papers on the Soviet Union. They dealt with the sources of Soviet behavior, the problems of Soviet society, the instruments of control, Gorbachev’s domestic agenda, the USSR’s international position, the Soviet view of national security, and the Soviet view of the United

⁶² Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 132.

States. The attached group looks at Gorbachev himself and his likely agenda for your meeting in Geneva.

The paper at Tab A concerns Gorbachev the man—the youngest member of the ruling Politburo and the first man to hold the office of General Secretary who did not rise through the party ranks during the Stalin era. Unlike his colleagues he appears relaxed and self-confident in public and has so far projected a charismatic leadership style.

As a negotiator Gorbachev never reads from a prepared text and presents his views clearly, using vivid, down-to-earth language. He appears to weigh his words for maximum dramatic effect, and turns his personal charm on or off at will to suit the occasion. In public encounters with the Western press he usually does well, but he showed anger and frustration in London and Paris when barraged with tough questions on human rights and religious freedom.

As discussed in the paper at Tab B, Gorbachev's central objective for Geneva is likely to be to promote the kind of positive atmosphere necessary for increased trade with the United States and our allies. At the same time he will be exploring your personal views on the possibility of improved relations and, of course, arms control. He is not likely to approach the meeting expecting major substantive breakthroughs [sic] on either arms control or regional issues, and he does not need agreement on a general arms control framework for domestic economic reasons.

On arms control questions Gorbachev [sic] is likely, among other things, to push for an extension of SALT II and continuation of the SALT I Interim Agreement. He should offer a strong defense of the Soviet compliance record and argue for a joint reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty and limits to ASAT systems. He will no doubt stress the Soviet position that a reduction in strategic offensive arms must be linked to some limits on SDI research.

Perhaps most importantly for Gorbachev, he will consider the meeting a success if he can project a strong leadership image, effectively articulate Soviet goals, and appear forthcoming and approachable in public. All of this would serve to strengthen the image of Soviet equality with the United States in the world arena. If substantive gains can be achieved as well, so much the better.

* * *

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: THE MAN

Mikhail Gorbachev is in some respects unlike any other leader the Soviet Union has ever had.

- At age 54, he is the first member of the post-Stalin generation to ever hold the party's top office. The more relaxed political environment that Khrushchev was ushering in as Gorbachev began his career may be reflected today in the more pragmatic, non-ideological approach to solving Soviet problems that he has exhibited so far.

- Gorbachev’s educational background also is unlike those of his predecessors or, for that matter, any other current Politburo member. While most of them were trained as engineers, Gorbachev has a law degree—training that may contribute to his ability to present his case to Soviet and foreign audience more effectively than his recent predecessors.
- Gorbachev by all accounts has a greater measure of self-confidence, even arrogance, than recent Soviet leaders about his ability to revitalize the Soviet system, deal effectively with foreign leaders, and restore credibility to Soviet diplomacy.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

It is Gorbachev’s unorthodox charismatic leadership style that most clearly sets him apart and captures the spirit of the regime he is now assembling.

- He is attempting to restore confidence in the top leadership and solidify support for its program through a calculated effort to demonstrate responsiveness and accessibility.
- He has made a point of making forays into the streets and speaking candidly about the Soviet situation.

He has consciously crafted this public image:

- A source with contacts in the Leningrad media reported that Gorbachev personally inspected every foot of videotape shot during his visit to Leningrad to approve what would be shown on television.
- Prime Minister Gandhi also was struck during his visit to Moscow by how much Gorbachev played to the photographers.

But Gorbachev realizes that popularity will not in itself re-motivate a society grown accustomed to drift. Behind the smile and approachability, Gorbachev—like Khrushchev before him—has a tough, hard-nosed side—reflected particularly in his maneuvering against political opponents and criticism of recalcitrant officials.

- He has publicly complained about the timidity of his Politburo colleagues.
- He has criticized many officials of the economic bureaucracy and already replaced about a fifth of them, including State Planning Committee Chairman Baybakov and Premier Tikhonov.
- He has enforced a tough anti-alcohol campaign that strikes at deep roots in the Soviet culture.
- A senior Soviet diplomat abroad claims that Gorbachev has begun to boss around high officials with a “wave of this hand,” asking for information and then issuing orders without consultation.

POLICY APPROACH

Gorbachev's analysis of the Soviet predicament is not unlike that of Andropov or even Brezhnev. But he does differ in his assessment of the gravity of the problem and the resolve he has shown to rock the boat if necessary to address it.

- His speeches are studded with language that evokes the image of crisis and implicitly concedes that the relevance of the socialist model of development is at stake.
- He has warned that accelerated economic growth and industrial modernization are imperative if the USSR is to be competitive on the world market.

Although Gorbachev's background and approach are unusual, he is a product of the Soviet system. He is attacking Soviet domestic problems, not with revolutionary programs but with traditional instruments: sweeping personnel changes, hard-driving exhortation, and administrative reorganization.

Gorbachev's attempt to inject new movement and credibility into Soviet policy extends into the international arena as well. He has imparted more skill to high-level diplomacy but has not diverted it from its traditional objectives.

His chief distinctions from his predecessors are his directness and his sensitivity to public relations. He is confident of his presentational skills and, whether in a press conference with Western reporters or one-on-one meetings with foreign officials, does not shy away from direct give-and-take sessions with Western journalists.

Gorbachev usually maintains his composure even when he is the target of unrestricted questioning from basically hostile Western audiences. In France, however, when bombarded with questions on human rights, he became red-faced and thumped his fist on the table until President Mitterrand was forced to intervene and calm him. In addition, when responding to a question on religious freedom during a meeting with the British Parliament, Gorbachev became angry, shouting "You govern your society; you leave us to govern ours." He also seems sensitive to the perception that the United States does not look on the USSR as an equal. In meetings with high-level US visitors, he has let this sensitivity surface several times, emphatically telling his guests that the Soviets are not beggars, cave-dwellers, or a "backward country of yokels."

NEGOTIATING STYLE

In his meetings with foreign officials, Gorbachev never reads from prepared text but only glances occasionally at an outline. He sticks closely to the agenda but seems unconcerned about how much time is spent on any given topic (and is known for his endurance at long meetings).

Gorbachev presents his view clearly, using vivid language flavored with down-to-earth phrases, topical examples, and personal anecdotes. As he speaks,

he seems to weigh the effect of his words on his interlocutor, at times hesitating as he searches for the precise word he wants, sometimes emphasizing his points with strong gestures, periodically pausing for dramatic effect, occasionally pounding a fist or hitting his pencil on the table for emphasis, but rarely getting emotional. Several foreign officials have commented on his expressiveness, which is in such marked contrast to his stone-face.

Gorbachev has a talent for appealing to the vanity, hopes, or prejudices of his counterparts, but he can also turn the charm off when it suits his purposes. When Indian Prime Minister Gandhi met with Gorbachev after Chernenko's funeral, for example, Gorbachev tried hard to make a positive impression on him, but when Gorbachev received Pakistani President Zia after the funeral, he coldly opened the conversation with: "You requested this meeting. What do you have to say?"

Gorbachev invariably gives the impression that he understands the details and nuances of his interlocutor's position. When some US Senators met with him in September 1985, for example, he displayed a good grasp of the US political climate and the various groups that contribute to the Administration's decision-making process. He knew each Senator's position on SDI, how each had voted on various defense-related issues, and in all ways demonstrated that he had thoroughly prepared for the meeting.

GORBACHEV'S PROSPECTS

As a young leader who could rule the Soviet Union well into the 21st century, Gorbachev appears to have a long-term vision for revitalizing Soviet society. As a self-styled realist he is not likely to anticipate immediate results. Nevertheless, he needs to show progress in the short term in order to maintain his political momentum and diffuse lingering resistance from conservative opponents. We are therefore likely to see more unconventional policy initiatives and further bold moves against the old guard in the months ahead.

* * *

GORBACHEV'S PERSONAL AGENDA FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING

General Secretary Gorbachev probably approaches the November meeting with little expectation of any major substantive breakthrough on arms control or regional issues. He may envision progress on secondary issues such as the consular agreement, cultural exchanges and possibly some trade issues. His immediate goal, however, will be to explore your personal commitment to future progress on improved relations—with all of the potential benefits to the USSR—and arms control. His broader objective will be to engender expectations in the aftermath of the meeting of possible progress on these issues if the US would first demonstrate the necessary "flexibility." Gorbachev's underlying hope therefore will be

that such expectations might inhibit the ability of your Administration to sustain funding for SDI and the strategic modernization program.

The notion is probably misleading that Gorbachev needs agreement on at least a general framework for arms control in order to achieve his domestic economic goal. The basic resource allocation decisions for the next several years almost certainly have been set. Given Gorbachev's commitment to economic modernization, he is not likely to have allowed his ability to promote his program to be dependent on the prospects for a major arms control breakthrough at your Geneva meeting. The more recent signs from Moscow indicate that the Soviets do not expect any significant achievements on arms control, and in his sessions with Secretary Shultz Gorbachev made no moves of the kind we would expect if he did in fact badly want, much less need, a significant arms control advance.

Moreover, while a strategic arms control agreement would have substantial value in providing assurance against large, unexpected growth in US programs in the years ahead, the Soviets probably feel they can reasonably forecast the level of US budget growth and force development for at least the next several years.

Most important, with the high level of expenditures they achieved by the mid-seventies, a low rate of procurement growth would still enable them to achieve substantial modernization and growth in their force capabilities. This has been clearly demonstrated by their achievements over the last ten years.

For Gorbachev's five-year economic agenda, trade with the West and access to Western technology is more important than achieving a formal arms control agreement. His central objective for the Geneva meeting, then, is to promote the kind of atmosphere that would provide more opportunity for such trade and a more open economic relationship—if not with the US, then with West Europe and Japan.

Along with progress on strategic issues, a basic goal for Gorbachev will be to strengthen the image of Soviet equality with the United States in the eyes of the US administration and the world public. His concern to demonstrate equality may prompt him at times to take an aggressive track so as not to appear on the defensive over such issues as human rights and the Soviet role in regional disputes. He may suggest the two sides issue a joint statement on the principle of equality. He may also view agreements on specific bilateral issues, such as establishing new consulates, expanding cultural and scientific exchanges, continuing bilateral talks on regional issues, and expanding trade as implicit steps in this direction.

Gorbachev probably would favor an agreement to hold subsequent meetings with you, even while voicing the standard Soviet line that these will be useful only if there is a prospect of achieving concrete results.

Gorbachev is likely to argue for an extension of SALT II, continuation of the SALT I Interim Agreement, and specifically continued observance of mutual restraint in abiding by the terms of the SALT I and II agreements.

He is likely to make a spirited defense of the Soviet record on compliance with arms control agreements, and to air Soviet charges of US noncompliance.

His intent will be to suggest that suspicion is mutual and that it should be resolved in the Standing Consultative Commission, without holding up further progress on arms control or deterring either side from continuing to observe agreements already reached.

Gorbachev may make a strong effort to persuade you to agree to a mutual reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty. The Soviets have called for a reaffirmation publicly and at the NST talks in Geneva. He also may expound upon the Soviet interpretation of that treaty, as Defense Minister Sokolov did in a recent article.

Gorbachev may make a determined pitch for an agreement to limit ASAT systems. He will argue that the US is now in a strong position vis-à-vis the USSR, having successfully tested an ASAT against a target in space. He may note that the Soviets have announced they no longer are bound by their unilateral moratorium on ASAT testing and assert that the USSR is ready to compete in this area if the US refuses to agree to ASAT limits.

A more ambitious goal, but one for which Gorbachev will have lower expectations of success, would be to reach an agreement with you in a more substantive area, such as nuclear testing. The Soviets have long urged the US to resume negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty, and to ratify the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty. The unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing that the Soviets announced in August was aimed at increasing pressure on the Administration to move in this direction, with the November meeting clearly in mind. Gorbachev may try to get you to agree to join the Soviets in a nuclear test moratorium. He could offer some kind of compromise on verification as a sweetener.

Gorbachev probably considers the NST talks the most difficult issue to resolve, and although he does not expect or need a major breakthrough soon, he nonetheless is likely to devote more attention to this issue than to any other during the November meeting. The focus of his attention will be on getting the President to agree that a reduction in strategic offensive arms must be linked to some limit on SDI research. As a minimum, Gorbachev will argue for a reaffirmation of the January 8 agreement as the basic framework for the NST negotiations, and he will reassert the Soviet interpretation of that agreement. Beyond that, he is likely to repeat—and possibly refine—the Soviet position that research beyond the laboratory stage is not permissible. He may try to get you to agree that the Defense and Space negotiations should focus on defining the boundary of permitted research.

Although Gorbachev will maintain that until space issues are resolved there can be no final agreement on strategic offensive weapons, he will likely devote some attention to the latest US START proposals, particularly those parts the Soviets find objectionable. He may also reveal some elements of the next Soviet counterproposal. Gorbachev may suggest that the distance between the two sides is shortest on INF issues, and that an INF agreement could be reached in the foreseeable future. He may also propose some mechanism to speed up progress in the

NST talks, such as more frequent meetings between Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze or some other special channel between the two capitals.

Gorbachev will count his meeting with you as a success if he is able to project a strong—even charismatic—leadership image, demonstrate competence, articulate effectively Soviet goals, and appear to be forthcoming and approachable. If substantive gains can be achieved, so much the better, But this is not a requirement in the short run. Moreover, Gorbachev appears to be preparing his position should the meeting go bad, and if it does he will do his best to place the blame on you.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, Jack Matlock files, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 9: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, First Private Meeting, Geneva, 10:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

November 19, 1985

This was the meeting Ronald Reagan had dreamed of, when he could get a Soviet leader in the room man-to-man and convince him the U.S. had no intention of attacking, in fact, that the two leaders were partners for world peace. The schedulers had only allotted 15 minutes for this meet-and-greet session with just interpreters present, but Reagan and Gorbachev would talk for a full hour, while their aides paced in the halls of the Maison Fleur d'Eau. This memcon, written by the veteran U.S. interpreter Dimitri Zarechnak (Yuri Uspensky is with Gorbachev), showcases Reagan's pitch, speaking about the mistrust and suspicions of the past and of the need to begin a new stage in U.S.-Soviet relations. Gorbachev describes his view of the international situation to Reagan, stressing the need to end the arms race. No wallflower; Gorbachev keeps going even when Reagan suggests perhaps it is time to join their aides. Interestingly, when Reagan expresses his concern that Soviet activity in the Third World is helping socialist revolutions in developing countries, Gorbachev does not challenge the assertion directly, but replies jokingly that he does not wake up "every day" thinking about "which country he would like to arrange a revolution in" At the very end of the session, Gorbachev alerts Reagan to some "confidential information" from the Soviet Academy of Sciences concerning the likelihood of earthquakes in California. Reagan graciously accepts the warning.

After the official photographers and the rest of the staff left the room, *President Reagan* began the conversation by telling the General Secretary that the two of them could really talk now. The President indicated that he approached this meeting with a very deep feeling and hoped that both of them could realize its importance and the unique situation that they were in.

The President indicated that both he and the General Secretary had come from similar beginnings which were quite different from their current positions. He, Reagan, was born and began his life in a small farming community, and now the two of them were here with the fate of the world in their hands, so to speak. The U.S. and the Soviet Union were the two greatest countries on Earth, the superpowers. They were the only ones who could start World War III, but also the only two countries that could bring peace to the world.

The President said that the two of them would talk about many things, including arms, in the main meeting, but he wondered if the primary aim between them should not be to eliminate the suspicions which each side had of the other. The resolution of other questions would follow naturally after this. To talk about arms while such suspicions exist is an empty exercise as both sides are defensive at the various negotiations because of these suspicions. Countries do not mistrust each

other because of arms, but rather countries build up their arms because of the mistrust between them.

The President expressed the hope that in their meetings they could get at the sources of the suspicions which exist. The Soviet Union did not approve of the U.S. system of government, and the U.S. did not approve of the Soviet system, and each could follow its own way, but with peaceful competition.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that he would like to return to the beginning, and thank the President for receiving him. He agreed with the President that this meeting was important in itself and he was glad that it was taking place. There had been no meetings between the U.S. President and the General Secretary of the USSR for six years, and many problems had developed in U.S.-Soviet relations and in the world in that period. He would also speak of these issues at the larger meeting, but would now like to avail himself of the opportunity which such a private meeting affords. He had met with members of the U.S. Congress and representatives of the U.S. Administration, but the Soviet side recognized the importance of a meeting with the President, and he, Gorbachev, would like to talk quietly, with respect for the United States and for the President, about many issues.

Gorbachev indicated that the Soviet side had prepared many months for this meeting, and he had tried to get a better understanding of the U.S. from Soviet and American sources. He had familiarized himself with all of the President's statements, and had paid special attention to the most recent ones. The main conclusion he had come to was that he was convinced that he and the President could not ignore each other. Nothing good would happen if the two sides took a different approach. But he was convinced that he could begin to change our relations for the better. This was his main theme, and the starting point for the meeting. After he had come to this conclusion, he had reviewed it a thousand times: perhaps it was too simplistic, bearing in mind the tremendous differences between the two countries? This was, of course, so, but on the other hand the two countries were so interrelated.

Gorbachev continued that in the Soviet Union it was considered that serious measures ought to be undertaken to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. This would demand political will at the highest levels. A veritable avalanche of information was descending upon Gorbachev and the President, both internally and from all around the world. Gorbachev was convinced that there was not only the fear of mutual destruction, although this did exist, but a realistic evaluation showed that the U.S. and the Soviet Union could cooperate, and they had done so in the past, without changing their political systems, culture or ideologies. They had cooperated in the area of economics, trade and culture while respecting the choices made by the U.S. people, and, obviously, the Soviet people as well.

Gorbachev said that there had sometimes been squalls in the bilateral relationship which had been severe, perhaps extremely so, but he could definitely state that in the USSR there was no enmity toward the United States or its people. The Soviet Union respected the U.S. and its people. The Soviet people and the leadership of the Soviet Union recognized the role of the U.S. in the world, and wished

it no harm. They realized that international relations could not be built on a desire to harm American interests.

At this point Gorbachev indicated that he would like to pause to permit the President to speak, and then he would like to say a few things about the Soviet side's understanding of the present international situation and what he thought should be changed in our policies in order to have a more constructive relationship based on greater realism.

The President replied that there was no question [sic] but that the Soviet and American peoples, if they learned more about each other, would find that they had many things in common, and that friendship between them would grow. Unfortunately, it was not people but governments that created arms.

The President continued that prior to this meeting there had been a wave of good wishes from the people of the United States, primarily expressing the desire to have peace. He knew something about the Soviet Union and its concern about war because of the suffering which the country had undergone in the Second World War—the courage, the sacrifices and the fact that 20 million people had been lost. People do not like war. Americans hate war. America is too good a place to be when there is no war.

The President continued that people did not get into trouble when they talked to each other, but rather when they talked about each other. There has been too much of the latter on both sides, and not enough of talking to each other. In the meeting with the larger group, where he and Gorbachev should soon move, the sides could explain why there is mistrust between them, but could make a beginning to try to eliminate this mistrust.

Gorbachev replied that they would discuss specific questions during their Geneva meetings, but he wished to give his evaluation of the present international situation as the Soviet side saw it, while they were still in their one-on-one meeting. He thought that a new policy was needed which would be adequate for the present international situation. The first thing that was needed was a policy aimed at resolving the central issue of the present time, that is, the question of war and peace. In the Soviet Union, in the United States, and in the whole world this was the question which was in the minds of everyone, even ordinary people, not to mention those who were more familiar with international processes.

Gorbachev continued that if the two sides reached a substantive agreement in Geneva, which would increase people's hope and would not destroy their view of the future with respect to the question of war and peace, this would be a great accomplishment. The question of ending the arms race was of critical importance in international politics, and we needed to say something to the world about this. The Soviet side is in favor of this. The U.S. side says that nuclear war cannot be permitted, and that it is for peace. We need to find a formula at this meeting which would give impetus toward moving towards resolution of the more important issues. This was the first thing.

Gorbachev continued that he would not like to seem irresponsible vis-a-vis the President, vis-a-vis his own country and vis-a-vis the world with regard to

this main issue. Young people were wondering about whether they would be alive or not, and the older generation, that had suffered so much, was also thinking about this. Yes, we have a meeting in Geneva, and we need to create an impetus. If no such impetus is created, there will be great disappointment, and no statements or press announcements will justify the meeting. People will say that we are irresponsible. And the two sides should not subject themselves to such a fate.

Gorbachev said that he would like to say two brief things about what realities Soviet and U.S. foreign policy should take into account. There were many problems in the world, involving capitalist countries and socialist countries, not to mention third-world countries, where the problems were the greatest. The problems involved questions of economics, structural change, ecology, sociology, etc. All of these issues demanded our attention and required solutions based on cooperation rather than confrontation. This was the second thing that Gorbachev wished to say.

Gorbachev continued that the third thing was that the two countries had had conflicts, both openly and privately, with regard to regional, third-world issues. But there was a great number of developing countries, and dozens of newly-created ones. They had great amounts of natural and human resources, but they were not only behind the developed countries, but the gap between them was growing greater. There was hunger, illiteracy and disease, causing a great deal of turmoil. We need to take a new political approach to these issues in order to resolve them. This was the basis for Gorbachev's approach to foreign policy, as well as that of his colleagues.

Gorbachev indicated that the issue of national interests had arisen. The Soviet Union had its national interests and the U.S. had them as well. Other countries also had their national interests. In the international context, we could not speak of advancing some of these interests at the expense of suppressing others. Without such an approach it would be difficult to act in the international arena. He had spoken sincerely about these three things. The Soviet Union was not playing a two-faced game. If it were playing such a game with regard to the United States, if it harbored secret intentions, then there could be no improvement in the relationship. He was sincere about this, and this applied to both countries.

Gorbachev apologized that he had taken so long, and said that he would be ending shortly. Perhaps the President was aware that a slogan had been used during the time of this meeting in Geneva which said that Reagan and Gorbachev should bear in mind that the world did not belong only to the two of them.

The President replied that he had not heard about such a slogan, but he wished to reply briefly to what Gorbachev had said, and then he thought it would be better for them to join with the rest of the group. He agreed that the two countries could mutually help the developing countries, but one of the things that created mistrust of the USSR by the U.S. was the realization of the Marxist idea of helping socialist revolutions throughout the world and the belief that the Marxist system should prevail. The U.S. felt, however, that the most important thing for a

country was its right to self-determination. The U.S. and USSR could help these countries, given our advanced technologies. We could help them to improve their standards of living. But the U.S. felt that the Soviet Union attempted to use force to shape the developing countries to their own pattern, and that such force was often used only by a minority of the people of the country. The U.S. believed that if the competing factions would settle their social and other differences themselves, the U.S. and USSR could then be ready to assist them in improving their economies. Both our countries should eliminate the mistrust which exists between them by discussing the causes of this mistrust. The U.S. had a very firm belief that people in all countries had the right of self-determination and the right to choose their own form of government.

The President indicated that when he and Gorbachev would go into the main meeting, he would greet the members of the Soviet Delegation, and Gorbachev should greet the members of the U.S. Delegation, after which there would be a photo opportunity next to the fireplace before they sat down at the table.

Gorbachev replied that they would continue to discuss these issues in the larger meeting, but he would like to say some more before they left the room. There had been those who considered that the American Revolution should have been crushed. The same applied to the French Revolution and to the Soviet Revolution. Over a long period of time millions of people had engaged in such struggles—in India, Indonesia, in Algeria (where one-and-a-half million people had died in their struggle for freedom). The Soviet Union did not consider that a way of life could be imposed if a society were not ready for it. These were only empty phrases. All these things which happen in the world have their national roots. The U.S. should not think that Moscow was omnipotent and that when he, Gorbachev, woke up every day he thought about which country he would now like to arrange a revolution in. This was simply not true. Gorbachev indicated that after his interpreter had translated what he had just said, he would like to convey some confidential information to Reagan, after which they could move to the next room.

Gorbachev said that before leaving for Geneva he had received some information from the Soviet Academy of Sciences, specifically the Institute for Earth Studies, where the scientists have become convinced that there would be a major earthquake in the area of California and Nevada within the next three years. Soviet scientists had always worked with U.S. scientists on these issues, and Reagan probably had knowledge of such information already, but this information was in addition to what had already been known. The Soviet scientists considered that the probability of an earthquake of a magnitude of 7 or 7.5 on the Richter scale was two-thirds and the probability of one of 6 or 6.5 was three-fourths. The Soviet side was ready to have its scientists give all the details to U.S. scientists. They have not yet been published.

The President replied that he realized that such an earthquake was considered to be overdue. He mentioned that an entire area along the Pacific, Asia, South America, and North America was considered to be a “ring of fire” because of the

volcanoes there. This had recently been demonstrated in Colombia, before that in Mexico and in the U.S. with Mount St. Helen: these volcanoes were showing greater activity. Because of faults in the earth and shifting plates, we know that such an event is overdue. A great deal of tension has been created along the San Andreas fault, and this tension had not been released by little quakes. The President indicated that he had not heard any specific time frame mentioned of the type that Gorbachev had spoken of, but all of our scientists knew that this was overdue and could happen at any time.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 10: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan-Gorbachev, First Plenary Meeting, Geneva, 11:27 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

November 19, 1985

When the two leaders join their somewhat anxious delegations, the room is crowded indeed. Secretary of State Shultz, White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Arthur Hartman, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Rozanne Ridgway, Special Adviser Paul Nitze, and NSC staffer Jack Matlock line one side of the table, with Ridgway's deputy, Mark Palmer, taking the notes; while on the other side Foreign Minister Shevardnadze is flanked by Gromyko's holdover deputy, Georgy Kornienko, Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Dobrynin, the rising glasnost architect Aleksandr Yakovlev, former Brezhnev spokesperson Leonid Zamyatin, and Brezhnev national security aide Andrei Alexandrov-Agentov, with diplomat Sergey Tarasenko as the Soviet notetaker. At this session, Gorbachev gives quite an assertive and ideological performance, explaining his views of how the U.S. military-industrial complex is profiting from the arms race and indicating that the Soviet side is aware of the advice that conservative think tanks, like the Heritage Foundation, give the President: "that the United States should use the arms race to frustrate Gorbachev's plans, to weaken the Soviet Union." There is also the first expression of an insight Gorbachev would take back to his Politburo, that defining one's security interests unilaterally actually dooms them, by threatening others' security. Reagan's response raises again the need to build trust and rejects Gorbachev's insistence that the interests of the military-industrial complex define the policy of the United States.

The President and the General Secretary emerged from their *tete-a-tete* and greeted each member of the other's delegation. There was then a photo opportunity. The two delegations were then seated.

The President opened the meeting by stating to the General Secretary that we are pleased that we are now underway. He noted that the two of them had had a good discussion. He then turned the floor over to the General Secretary.

Gorbachev thanked the President. He noted that he and the President had agreed that it was important to have a constructive exchange of views at this meeting. He had said already during their one on one meeting that the Soviet Union attaches a lot of importance to this meeting, to that fact that it is taking place after almost seven years since the last Summit. A lot of things had changed in the world and in developments in our two countries. Many problems had come up which were of concern to the American people, to the Soviet people and to their leaders. In this context they regarded this meeting as a positive event.

The General Secretary continued that there is the question of how to proceed and at what level. The Soviet Union wishes to proceed to make our bilateral relationship one based more on trust. We need to think together about a mechanism

for implementing this idea. This should include a political dialogue at various levels. It is not good when for extended periods our relationship is reduced to having our entire dialogue take place via the press.

The General Secretary said that he understood that this was the President's idea about dialogue. The President had said that he was for talking to each other rather than about each other. The task before us is strengthening confidence. We should be looking for opportunities in various areas, for example trade and economic relations can be helpful. Experience has shown that the Soviet Union and the United States can live without each other economically. But they can't hope that a strong peace and understanding will emerge without active links and relationships. Economic and commercial ties are important not only in themselves but also as a political link.

The General Secretary continued that some underestimate this fact. Sometimes these relations are used in a way which is detrimental to the process we want. This had been seen in the past. As regards the embargo it had been in existence; the President had cancelled it but that had not been followed by other steps. There is interest among your businessmen and in our economic circles. This can be part of the mechanism of trust.

The General Secretary said that he welcomed the President's idea for a broad based exchange of people in science, culture and other areas. He was pleased that American people are interested in a greater understanding of the Soviet people and noted that American travel to the Soviet Union was going up and had reached some 50,000 annually. He also welcomed a more lively and dynamic set of contacts between foreign ministries and embassies. High level Summits should fit in with this and be the center piece of our mechanism for building trust.

The General Secretary said that he dwelled on this subject of dialogue in somewhat greater detail at the outset as he understood that the President finds this of interest and concern.

He then returned to his initial point that after many years the two leaders are meeting. Relations are at their lowest level. He did not know whether the Administration finds this good. The President's recent statements seemed to indicate that he wants improved relations. That is definitely the Soviet desire. Regardless of the differences and without simplifying difficulties, the two sides have to get down to making their relations normal. He had said in their one-on-one meeting that the Soviet leadership as a whole is for this improvement, that he did not see any opposition to this view. They had come to the conclusion that there was a need for an improvement and that this would be desirable. If there is a will and a desire on the American side, and the Soviet Union seizes this desire, the Soviet Union is ready to accommodate it with no preconditions on their part. The General Secretary noted that he mentioned this fact as the United States when it talks about an improvement sets preconditions. This has been and continues to be unacceptable.

He mentioned that in Moscow he had said to Secretary Shultz and National Security Adviser McFarlane that he wanted our relations and the process of

making policies to be rid of illusions and mistakes. The Soviets know of some studies in United States think tanks in which the United States ruling class indicates its view that the Soviet economy is in a perilous state. Therefore it would be good to push the Soviet Union into a [sic] arms race so as to make more room for U.S. foreign policy. Or, these studies assert, the Soviet Union is lagging behind in areas of high technology so the delusion is that the United States should rush ahead to achieve military superiority. He would note here what he had said to Shultz and McFarlane. The Soviet Union is often accused of causing problems for the United States in Europe and in the Third World. The two sides may have differences on concrete situations and on specific bilateral and international matters. But it preceeds [sic] from a recognition of the role and weight of the United States in international affairs. The Soviets duly appreciate American achievements in technology, service and other spheres—the fruits of the labor of the American people. The Soviets greatly respect the Americans. This is most important. Yes, there are differences: political, ideological, and in terms of values. But we have managed to stay alive for many years. There has been no war. He praised to God that this never happens. Gorbachev said that this broad based fundamental approach will make possible an improvement in the relations.

He continued that it would be bad if instead of policy we have only conjectural reactions and pinpricks. This can happen on occasion [sic], but it is a different matter if this becomes the center of policy. This makes both the United States and the Soviet Union insecure. There needs to be a long term prospect for the future of our relations. He wanted to call attention to the need for new policies vis-a-vis each other and international processes. The two sides should not be captive to outdated approaches. Life is changing.

He continued that whatever the two sides try to do in setting policies, the peoples of the world attach priority to the issue of war and peace. If they were unable to tackle this issue, it is difficult to see how they could deal with others. This would devalue the whole process. They must deal with the critical, pivotal issue of peace and war. Their meeting must conclude by giving an impulse to this policy. Of course they could go back to the negotiations in Geneva. But if they go back without out [sic] giving any greater hope or impulse to the process, they will take a scolding in their countries and in the world. Isn't this precisely the matter to put at the basis of their policies?

Gorbachev continued that there are people linked to military affairs in both countries. He realized that there are people who earn their salaries from these matters. But studies in both countries had shown, what for example, Japan and the FRG have been able to do with little expenditure on the military. They have experienced an economic upsurge. Soviet and American scholars have shown that one job in the military sector is three times as costly as in the civilian sector. More jobs can be created if money is channeled into civilian areas. The situation is so acute that if they returned without saying anything about arms control, about the first priority issue, people will maintain that this meeting gave birth to a mouse.

The United States has economic problems and the Soviet Union has them. He knew the Soviet problems better. But both sides could do better if they could release resources to the civilian economy. He knew what think tanks like the Heritage Foundation which advised the Administration particularly when the President was running for office the first and second time, were saying. Before this meeting, they had been saying that the United States should use the arms race to frustrate Gorbachev's plans, to weaken the Soviet Union. But history teaches that this was not possible earlier even when the Soviet Union was not so strong. Now that it is even stronger, this is a delusion.

Gorbachev continued that of course there are many problems, there are urgent tasks in the developing world. It makes the United States and the Soviet Union selfish to devote so much money to the military when the destiny of millions and billions of people are at stake. It should not be a surprise that there are protest [sic] against this in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere. The military is devouring huge resources. Whatever approach they take, it must be realistic.

Gorbachev continued that he thinks there is a basis for movement, to meet each others [sic] concerns. The President had recently said that there should be no nuclear war. He agreed. [The] President had said that they should proceed on a [sic] equal basis. He agreed. The President had said he was for exchange among our peoples. The Soviet side agreed with that as well, so long as it was within a framework of respect for sovereignty and the values each society had developed. There must be respect for the path each side had chosen.

He continued[:] the Soviets often heard the United States argue that there should be no agreement signed, no document signed that is not consistent with United States national interest. There is no dispute about this but how should one think about national interest? Should this be that in order to improve the life of one's own people, there would be plunder of the resources of others[?]. No, for himself he could say that this was not the way. He recalled a conversation with Mrs. Thatcher in which she quoted Lord Palmerston that nations have no permanent enemies[,] only permanent interests. But in implementing this approach in the international context, the interest of others must be taken into account. The United States Administration states that its vital interests go far beyond the United States and often near the Soviet Union. Many zones are declared vital interests of the United States. The Soviet Union fails to understand how the United States can not take account of other countries' interest.

The General Secretary stated that he was hopeful that when they came to the afternoon discussion both sides could express their views about war and peace and disarmament. He would like in conclusion of his overview of the world's situation to state that the Soviet Union believes that the central question is how to halt the arms race and to disarm. For their part the Soviet [sic] Union would not put forward proposals which would be detrimental to the United States. They are for equal security. If anything detrimental to the United States was proposed, this would not be acceptable to the Soviet Union because it would not make for stability. The Soviet Union has no ulterior motives. What the President had said

about equal security, no superiority and movement toward halting the arms race were the conditions for building a cooperative relationship. The United States is losing a big market in the Soviet Union; the Soviets have good economic cooperation with other countries.

Gorbachev continued that we can live in this world only together, so both must think how to put their relations on a new track. If the United States thinks that by saying these things, Gorbachev is showing weakness, that the Soviet Union is more interested than the United States, then this will all come to nothing. The Soviet Union will not permit an unequal approach but if there is on the U.S. side a positive will, the United States will find the Soviets an active participant in the process.

President Reagan then began his presentation. He said that as he had noted earlier, if the two sides are to get down to reducing the mountains of weapons, that both must get at the cause of the distrust which has led to them. Why does the distrust and suspicion exist? They had fought together in two wars. Americans were buried near Murmansk who had been bringing in supplies to help the Soviet Union in the second world war. When that war ended, the Americans were the only ones whose industry had not been bombed and who had not sustained great losses. The Americans were the only ones who had a weapon of great devastation, the nuclear weapon. They were the only ones able to use it if they had wanted to. They reduced from 12½ to 1½ million men in their armed forces, allowing their Navy to go down from 1,000 ships to less than half that number. And the United States began making proposals to the Soviet Union and the world about sharing nuclear technology and doing away with the weapon. Eighteen times until this meeting the United States had proposed meetings and for twelve of those times the United States had nuclear superiority. The United States was willing to give it up. Most of the times the United States did not get cooperation from Gorbachev's predecessors.

The President stated that this is the first time that the United States is seeking with the Soviet Union to actually reduce the mountains of these weapons. The other meetings, eighteen so far, merely addressed regulating the increase in these weapons. In 1980 the President had said he could not support this approach. He would stay as long as needed with the policy of insisting on reductions. The President recalled that the Soviet government had talked about a one world communist state and had been inspiring revolutions around the world. The United States saw the Soviet military build up, including in nuclear weapons. This came after dozens of United States proposals. The United States has fewer nuclear weapons than in 1969. The Soviet Union has had the largest military in history. Yes, he had made a promise to refurbish the American military and this has been done, but the United States is still behind. The Soviet Union has 5.4 million [sic] men in their armed forces: The U.S. has 2.4 million men. The United States also sees an expansionist Soviet Union. It has a satellite in Cuba just 90 miles off our shores. We had problems there with nuclear missiles but this was settled. Now we see Afghanistan, Ethiopia [sic], Angola and Yemen—with for example 35,000 Cubans in Angola.

The President stated that he was setting all of this as the basis for American concern and distrust. With regard to American industry and our military policy, or any effort to incite our people to more military sales, the budget of the United States government for elderly and handicapped and other social needs is bigger than the military budget. Two thirds of our military spending pays for man power; only a small percentage is spent on weapons. This is a very small percentage of our GNP; of course we would be better off without it. The basic interest of our industry is consumer products, for example the automobile and airplane industry. The United States has no interest in carrying on an arms race.

The President said that now the two sides have come to this meeting he had said frankly why the American people are concerned. Maybe the Soviets did not want war but it seemed to want to get its way. The United States has seen violations of arms control agreements already signed. The United States is ready to try to meet the Soviet Union's concerns if the Soviet Union is ready to meet ours. But more than words are needed. The two sides need to get on to deeds. If the two sides just get in bargaining over a particular type of weapon we will just go on trying to keep advantages. But if we can go on the basis of trust, then those mountains of weapons will disappear quickly as we will be confident that they are not needed.

The President continued that no other nations in the world can do what the Soviet Union and the United States can. They are the only ones which can bring about a world war. The only ones. That is a measure of their responsibility. The two must remove the causes of distrust. History since World War II has shown that if the United States had any hostile designs it was in a position to impose its will with little danger to itself. Indeed the United States had restrained its own programs.

The President continued that today he wanted to talk about one specific question. Gorbachev had said that the United States had indicated an interest in achieving a first strike capability by having an anti-missile shield which would destroy missiles before they hit the target. The United States did not know whether this would be possible. The United States had a research program. The Soviet Union had the same kind of program. The United States has some hope that it might be possible. If both sides continue their research and if one or both come up with such a system then they should sit down and make it available to everyone so no one would have a fear of a nuclear strike. A mad man might come along with a nuclear weapon. If we could come up with a shield and share it, then nobody would worry about the mad man. He didn't even want to call this a weapon; it was a defensive system.

The President said that he hoped he had made clear that it is the sincerest desire of the United States to eliminate suspicion. When he thinks of our two great powers, and of how many areas we could cooperate in helping the world, he thinks about how we must do this with deeds. This is the best way for both sides to assure the other that they have no hostile intent. (This ended the President's presentation).

Gorbachev asked whether there was any more time. Should the two sides stick to their schedule. The President responded that he thought that they should stick to the schedule as it calls next for lunch. Gorbachev said this was fine, that he would like to respond when they opened the next session at 1430 if the President would give him the floor. The President said that the floor was Gorbachev's. Gorbachev said that he understood they would get into more specific discussion in the afternoon. The President agreed, and the delegations got up from the table.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 11: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, Second Plenary Meeting, Geneva, 2:30 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

November 19, 1985

After lunch, the delegations reconvene for an extended discussion in which voices begin to be raised, especially Gorbachev's. After Reagan's discussion of SDI and the need for strategic defense if a madman ever got his hands on nuclear weapons, Gorbachev lays out the Soviet counter to a U.S. effort actually to build an SDI system: there will be no reduction in strategic weapons, and the Soviet Union's "response will not be a mirror image of your program, but a simpler, more effective system" (meaning decoys and multiple warheads that would overwhelm defenses). The U.S. president promises that "SDI will never be used by the U.S. to improve its offensive capability or to launch a first strike." Reagan brings up regional issues, particularly Vietnam, Cambodia and Nicaragua. But Gorbachev seems to be so focused on the issue of strategic defenses that he is not willing to engage in serious discussion of other subjects. Finally, Reagan invites the Soviet leader for a walk and a private talk (pre-scheduled, but nonetheless coming at a useful moment in the increasingly contentious conversation).

The President offered Gorbachev the floor to comment on the President's presentation during the morning session.

Gorbachev said that they both had discussed how to conduct their meetings and during the preparations had discussed whether to focus on the causes of tensions or on solutions. Both sides had said a lot about causes. He is convinced that if they start making up a list of objections, they will not get far toward normalization, more trust and more respect—and most importantly, toward giving some impulse to the Geneva process, which is at a crucial stage now.

He will be reasonable in what he proposes. He does not plan an extensive debate over what [the] President said. But, as he said during the private meeting this morning, the Soviets reject a "primitive approach" toward the world around us—that is that everything can be traced to some Soviet plan for supremacy or world domination. We have discussed this many times, and when it raises regional issues, the U.S. frequently charges the Soviet Union with expansionism—in Afghanistan, Angola, even South Yemen.

Hotbeds of international conflict do sour international relations, Gorbachev continued, but the Soviets cannot share U.S. views of the causes of regional conflict. You say that the Soviet Union and Soviet expansionism is responsible. But that is either a mistake or a deliberate distortion. If U.S. policies are based on this mistaken view, it is difficult to see the way out of these problems. An assessment of Soviet policy in the Third World on the basis of such a misconception can lead only to undermining international security.

Let me give you our view, Gorbachev said. We take a “principled approach” to the developing countries and their problems. First, we have no monopolies in these countries which exploit their manpower and resources. We seek no commercial concessions, but rely on our own resources one hundred percent. Therefore, we have no selfish interests or expansionist aims, and desire no military bases.

Second, if you look at the developing world in an unbiased way, you will see that there is a long-term objective process which began after World War II. It is a natural one of third-world countries first pressing for political independence and then striving to gain control over their own resources and labor. This is the root cause of what is happening.

You overestimate the power of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev observed. The U.S. attributes to [the] USSR the power and capability to upset the whole world, but we are realistic pragmatists who categorically oppose attempts to dominate other countries from the outside. We do oppose the export of counterrevolution. Attempts have been made to crush revolutions in the past. This happened with the American revolution [sic], with the French Revolution and with the October Revolution. But the idea that that small numbers of people from outside a country can turn it to revolution is not realistic. India, Indonesia, Korea—these are all countries with millions of people.

The U.S. speaks of Afghanistan and Ethiopia as if it were the Soviet Union that stirred the pot there. But we first heard of revolutions there on the radio. We had good relations with Haile Selassie and were not the cause of the revolution there. It is wrong to think we are plotting; this is just not right. But people want freedom and we do support “progressive movements.” We make no secret of this and it is in the Party program. But we have no secret plans for world domination.

The U.S. has its values and the Soviet Union has its own. Regional problems are caused by a social struggle evolving over many stages. Sometimes you support one faction and we another, but both of us can play a role together to solve problems, and in some areas we already do so.

In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union supports a “regularizing process” around that country, a political settlement under the United Nations, and you could help. The U.S. however does not help. You say the USSR should withdraw its troops, but actually you want them there, and the longer the better.

Gorbachev continued, saying that the Soviets are ready to promote a package solution involving a non-aligned Afghanistan, Soviet troop withdrawal, the return of refugees, and international guarantees of no outside interference. There are possibilities for a political reconciliation, he added, and said that Afghanistan is already ready to cooperate, but requires the cooperation of all groups.

He then asserted that the Soviet Union has no plan for using Afghanistan to gain access to a warm water port, to extend its influence to the Persian Gulf, or to impinge on U.S. interests in any way. It is a situation which could be used to improve our overall relationship, by fostering cooperation by the conflicting sides and abstaining from interference. It is an area we should explore, he concluded.

Gorbachev then stated that these are just examples to illustrate the Soviet policy toward the Third World. Basically the issues are internal problems for the states involved. We can continue to work on these issues with our discussions by specialists on regional matters.

Gorbachev then noted that the President had charged that it is the Soviet Union which had been building up its arms while the U.S. acted with restraint. This is a major question. Much depends on the character of the present strategic situation and how it will develop in the future. It is the central question of our relations.

Gorbachev continued by saying that twenty years ago there was no strategic balance; U.S. had four times as many strategic delivery systems than the USSR and also forward-based systems. He then asked rhetorically what the U.S. would have done if the Soviet Union had possessed four times as much? The U.S. would have had to take steps, just as the Soviet Union did, to establish parity.

In fact, Gorbachev asserted, the U.S. has tripled the number of its nuclear weapons and has more nuclear weapons than the Soviet Union. Negotiations began as we approached parity, and the Soviets have not violated the nuclear balance and are not trying to surpass the U.S., since superiority cannot be the basis for normal relations. All institutes which study the problem, including the ISS in London, conclude that there is strategic parity. Force structures are different, but they support different strategies.

The Soviet Union wants parity at a lower level, he continued. We are for equal security and agreed to embark upon the negotiations in Geneva. We must meet each other half way if we are to find a way to reduce strategic weapons. The time has come for us both to muster the political will and realism to make progress and to end efforts to outsmart or overrun the other side. Even now, due to computer technology, one side could get ahead in space. But we can match any challenge, though you might not think so. We know that the U.S. can meet any challenge from us and we can meet any challenge from you. But why not take a step which would permit lowering the arms level?

Gorbachev then said that they, the Soviets, think SDI can lead to an arms race in space, and not just a defensive arms race but an offensive arms race with space weapons. Space weapons will be harder to verify and will feed suspicions and mistrust. Scientists say any shield can be pierced, so SDI cannot save us. So why create it? It only makes sense if it is to defend against a *retaliatory* strike. What would the West think if the Soviet Union was developing these weapons? You would react with horror. Weinberger has said that if the USSR had such a defense first, it would be bad. If we go first, you feel it would be bad for the world, feeding mistrust. We cannot accept the rationale which says it is good if you do it and bad if we do it.

Gorbachev then said that he knows [the] President is attached to the program, and for that reason the Soviets have analyzed it seriously. The Soviet conclusion is that if the U.S. implements its plan, the Soviet Union will not cooperate in an effort to gain superiority over it. We will have to frustrate this plan, and we will build up in order to smash your shield.

You say the Soviet Union is doing the same, he continued, but asserted that this is not the case. Both of us do research in space of course, but Soviet research is for peaceful purposes. The U.S. in contrast has military aims, and that is an important difference. The U.S. goal violates the ABM Treaty, which is of fundamental importance. Testing is also inconsistent with the Treaty, and can only exacerbate mistrust.

If the U.S. embarks on SDI, the following will happen: (1) no reduction of offensive weapons; and (2) [the] Soviet Union will respond. This response will not be a mirror image of your program, but a simpler, more effective system. What will happen if you put in your “seven layers” of defense in space and we put in ours? It will just destabilize the situation, generate mistrust, and waste resources. It will require automatization which will place important decisions in the hands of computers and political leaders will just be in bunkers with computers making the decisions. This could unleash an uncontrollable process. You haven’t thought this through; it will be a waste of money, and also will cause more distrust and more weapons.

Gorbachev then referred to the President’s remarks regarding the need for a defense against some madman in the future who might get his hands on nuclear weapons. He observed that they should remember that they will have sufficient retaliatory force for a long time to deter such use.

Gorbachev then concluded by saying that verification will not be a problem if the basic question is solved. The Soviets are prepared for full verification of a ban on space weapons. If such a ban is agreed upon, then the two countries could negotiate on their respective proposals for offensive weapons reduction. The Soviets are ready to compromise. If space weapons are banned, the situation would be completely different; it would create a new attitude on the Soviet side. The process would be different, however, if they leave Geneva without any agreements. If agreement on this point is not possible, they [sic] the Soviets would have to rethink the current situation.

The President then made the following points:

- Gorbachev’s presentation illustrates the lack of trust between us. It is difficult for us to understand the level of suspicion which the Soviet Union holds.
- Even when we were allies in World War II we encountered inexplicable Soviet suspicion. For example, permission was not given for U.S. bombers to land on Soviet territory in order to reduce the dangers of bombing our common enemy. We cannot understand this kind of suspicion.
- Gorbachev spoke of parity, but there is none today. True that U.S. once had nuclear superiority, but in June, 1946, offered to place all nuclear weapons under international control. It has also made numerous other offers, and the President listed twelve such between 1953 and 1969.
- Since SALT-I was signed, the Soviet Union has added 6,000 nuclear warheads. Since SALT-II, 3,850 have been added. Meanwhile, the U.S.

removed 2400 warheads from Europe, while the Soviet Union threatened Europe with its SS-20's. Our Allies requested protection and it fell to [the] President to implement their request when [the] Soviets refused to conclude an agreement to remove the threat.

- Now we are locked in a Mutual Assured Destruction policy. The U.S. does not have as many ICBM's as [the] Soviet Union, but has enough to retaliate. But there is something uncivilized about this. Laws of war were developed over the centuries to protect civilians, but civilians are the targets of our vast arsenals today.
- The Strategic Defense Initiative is the President's idea. History teaches that a defense is found for every offensive weapon. We don't know if strategic defensive weapons will be possible, but if they are, they should not be coupled with an offensive force. Latter must be reduced so it will not be a threat. And if strategic defenses prove possible, we would prefer to sit down and get rid of nuclear weapons, and with them, the threat of war.
- Regarding Afghanistan: Their "leader" was supplied by the Soviet Union. Actually he was their second choice, since the first one did not work out as they wished. The Soviet invasion has created three million [sic] refugees. He made [a] suggestion for [a] solution at UN. Specifically, how about bringing about the mutual withdrawal of all outside forces, then forming a coalition of Islamic states to supervise the installation of a government chosen by the people of Afghanistan?
- Regarding Cambodia: We signed an agreement with North Vietnam. It was violated and the North Vietnamese took over South Vietnam and also Laos and Cambodia. It now rules Cambodia. We should put an end to this and together supervise [the] establishment of a government chosen by the Cambodian people.
- Regarding Nicaragua: The Soviets have advisers there. The Sandinistas have built a tremendous military machine, far more than they need for defense. They have declared an aim of spreading revolution elsewhere. The President then reviewed the history of Somoza's removal—the appeal to the OAS, and the Sandinista promise of free elections and a free press. But then when Somoza was removed, the Sandinistas forced other groups out of the coalition and are trying to establish totalitarian control. The Contras are only trying to reinstate the goals of the original revolution.
- Such things as those noted are behind our suspicion and mistrust.
- Every military judgment has it that Soviet forces are designed for offensive operations.
- The U.S. [is] willing to work on an agreement to move away from mutual threats. SDI would never be used by [the] U.S. to improve its offensive capability or to launch a first strike. SDI should not lead to an arms race; we can both decide to reduce and eliminate offensive weapons.
- These are things we could do to remove mistrust. Our goal is not an arms race. We can return to parity in one of two ways: either we both reduce

offensive weapons, or we can build them up and use defensive systems to offset them. The U.S. does not seek superiority, but [it] will do what is necessary to protect its freedoms.

Gorbachev then asked what they should tell their negotiators in Geneva.

The President replied that they could be given guidelines to reduce nuclear weapons, say by 50%. We could negotiate on the structure of forces, since we know the structure of our forces is different.

Gorbachev asked about the U.S. goal of SDI and how this relates to our January agreement to prevent an arms race in space.

The President said that he did not see a defensive shield as an arms race in space. He then recounted a conversation between a Chinese official and Ambassador Walters, in which Walters was asked what happens when a man with a spear that can penetrate anything meets a man with a shield that is impenetrable. Walters responded that he did not know, but that he did know what happens when a man with no shield meets that same opponent who has the spear. Neither of us wants to be in the position of having no shield.

Gorbachev then asked whether the President considered developing SDI weapons as the militarization of space.

The President replied that he did not. If the technology was developed, it should be shared. Neither side should deploy until the other did. It should be done in combination with lowering offensive weapons so that neither could gain a first-strike advantage.

The President then invited *Gorbachev* to take a walk for another private conversation and the two departed at 3:40 p.m.

Prepared by: Jack F. Matlock

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 12: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, Second Private Meeting, Geneva, 3:40 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

November 19, 1985

A short walk in the brisk wind coming off Lake Geneva brings back some of the spirit of the first private meeting. Down in the boathouse living room burns a log fire, courtesy of the ace American advance team, which had shown the president and the First Lady the cozy setting the day before. As Gorbachev and Reagan settle into the easy chairs by the fire with just their interpreters, the American president hands over a neatly typed paper in Russian summarizing arms control proposals the two sides have already put on the table, such as the 50 percent reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. Gorbachev insists that such an agreement cannot be negotiated apart from the issues of strategic defense and that it should be tied to a reconfirmation of the traditional understanding of the 1972 ABM Treaty. Reagan does not see the “defensive” weapons as part of the arms race and is surprised that Gorbachev “kept on speaking on space weapons,” when he, Reagan, would agree to a formal treaty for open laboratories and sharing the results. Gorbachev admits that, on a human level, he could understand that the “idea of strategic defense had captivated the President’s imagination.” But he cannot get over the nightmare of a blitzkrieg from space. On the walk back from the boathouse, Reagan raises and Gorbachev accepts the idea of the next summit in the U.S., and a subsequent one in Moscow.

During their brief walk from the villa at Fleur d’Eau to the pool house, the President and General Secretary Gorbachev did not discuss substance, confining their conversation to the President’s old movies. In the course of that conversation the President suggested to Mr. Gorbachev that he inform Mr. Arbatov that he had made not only grade-B movies, but also a few good ones. Gorbachev mentioned that he had recently seen “Kings’ Row” and had liked it very much.

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Seated in front of a fireplace at the pool house *the President* handed Gorbachev some papers and suggested that they might contain the seed of something the two of them could agree upon. He added that he had one copy done in Russian.

Gorbachev devoted a few minutes to reading through the separate documents.

Gorbachev prefaced his reaction by saying that, of course, what he would present now was based on his first impression of what was contained in the formulations. He thought that some of the issues dealt with did contain some substance that merited serious discussion with a view to bringing the positions of the sides closer together.

With reference to space weapons he had some questions to ask and, on the basis of his first reading, some considerations and objections to state. He would first refer to something that could be left for further discussions.

The President interjected to the effect that the material set forth in these papers should be viewed as a seed for possible instructions to the arms negotiators of both sides.

Gorbachev said he understood the President's idea, but still had some objections to state.

With reference to paragraph 1 of the first paper, concerning 50 percent reductions in strategic offensive arms, that was acceptable and he was prepared here to discuss this matter in terms of seeking a mutually acceptable solution. However, he would have to note that during the meeting between Foreign Ministers in Geneva last January agreement had been reached that such reductions would be negotiated together with an agreement halting an arms race in space. In other words, arms reductions must be viewed in their interrelationship with space weapons. That idea had been agreed upon in Geneva in January, but he had to note that here it seems to have evaporated.

The President said that he did not see these defensive weapons as constituting a part of the arms race in view of what he had said just a few moments ago at the table, to the effect that if and when such arms were developed, they would be shared with everyone involved in nuclear weapons. Why could this matter not be set aside in order to see what could be agreed upon regarding the sharing of such things? This would enable the two sides to determine what policies were available that could help all of us to get rid of nuclear weapons.

Without reacting to the President's latter remark, *Gorbachev* said that that was his first comment. His second comment regarding the same section of the document he had just read was to note the suggestion that a separate interim agreement be concluded limiting land-based INF missiles with a view to eventual complete elimination of such missiles. This, too, required further clarification. What weapons would be covered in such an agreement, taking into account the existence of not only U.S. but also British and French missiles of that type? This had not been made clear.

Secondly, in the paper mentioning the possible interim agreement only land-based medium-range missiles were mentioned; what about medium-range cruise missiles launched from aircraft or from aircraft carriers? One had to note immediately that under the language contained in the document some nuclear weapons would clearly remain outside limitations; nevertheless, they did exist, they could be fired and naturally should also be covered by any agreement.

Moving on to paragraph 3 of the same document concerning research conducted by each side in the area of strategic ABM defense, *Gorbachev* wanted to ask precisely what the President had in mind when speaking of such research. He understood that basic research in laboratories was underway (he meant scientific laboratories, of course) but would also note that such research should not include the construction of prototypes or samples, or their testing. He emphasized that

it was necessary to clarify the precise meaning of that research. The reason he was asking this question was that he knew that in the President's White House today two different interpretations of the ABM Treaty's provisions were in existence. One was a narrow interpretation which had been contained in a number of documents of the U.S. Congress and of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. That narrow interpretation was always limited to research not going beyond the threshold of laboratory work. Now, however, he was also aware of a broader interpretation, under which the construction of prototypes and samples would be permitted. Under that interpretation one could in no way speak about complying with the provisions of the ABM Treaty. Thus, further clarification was needed here as well.

The President said that we did indeed have more than one interpretation of the ABM Treaty. Under one such interpretation testing would be included in order to know that in practice we did have such a weapon. Just to have a laboratory theory would not be enough. It was his thought that all this could be covered by an agreement under which we as well as others could agree that no country would have a monopoly of such weapons. They would be shared by all. The worst thing that he could imagine was for any one country to acquire a first-strike capability.

Gorbachev noted that the Soviet Union had declared for all the world to hear, and was now declaring to the United States as well, that the Soviet Union would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. Was this not sufficient if this matter were taken seriously? However, he had to note that the United States did not believe him.

The President interjected that he and *Gorbachev* might not always be here.

Gorbachev said that when he spoke of not being believed he meant that the United States did not believe the Soviet Union's statement he had just mentioned. In that case, why should the Soviet Union believe the President's statement about sharing results of the research in question, and that the United States would not take advantage of having developed a strategic defense?

The President replied that that was because the negotiators of both sides could set down in a specific agreement that both governments had agreed not to retain a monopoly of defensive weapons, an agreement that he and *Gorbachev* would sign. He would also point out that our two countries were not alone in the world. There were others, such as Qaddafi, for example, and people of that kind, who would not at all be averse to dropping a nuclear weapon on the White House. He believed in the idea of both our governments agreeing that both conduct relevant research and that both share the results of such research; if one country produced a defensive shield before the other, it would make it available to all.

As for believing the Soviet Union's commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, the President would remind *Gorbachev* that in Stockholm we had subscribed to the doctrine that countries must not use force against each other.

With some emotion *Gorbachev* appealed to the President as follows: if the two sides were indeed searching for a way to halt the arms race and to begin to deal seriously with disarmament, then what would be the purpose of deploying a

weapon that is as yet unknown and unpredictable? Where was the logic of starting an arms race in a new sphere? It must clearly be understood that verification of such weapons would be totally unreliable because of their maneuverability and mobility even if they were classified as defensive. People would not be in a position to determine what it was that would be placed into space and would surely regard it as an additional threat, thereby creating crisis situations. If the goal was to get rid of nuclear weapons, why start an arms race in another sphere?

The President asked Gorbachev to remember that these were not weapons that kill people or destroy cities, these were weapons that destroy nuclear missiles. If there were agreement that there would be no need for nuclear missiles, then one might agree that there would also be no need for defenses against them. But he would also urge Gorbachev to remember that we were talking about something that was not yet known, and that if it were known, that would still be years away. Why then should we sit here in the meanwhile with mountains of weapons on each side?

Gorbachev countered by suggesting that they announce to the world that President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev had declared firmly in official statements that both countries would refrain from research, development, testing and deployment of space weapons and that such agreement would be subject to appropriate verification. Thus they could implement the idea of open laboratories and at the same time begin the process of 50-percent reductions in offensive arms.

The President asked if Gorbachev had in mind that Soviet laboratories would be open to visits by our experts and that their experts would be free to visit our laboratories.

Gorbachev replied that the Soviet Union would agree to open its laboratories provided they were used for the purpose of verifying how the agreement on banning and non-use of space weapons was being complied with.

The President said he did not know why Gorbachev kept on speaking of space weapons. We had no idea of precisely what the nature of these weapons would be; however, we certainly had no intention of putting something into space that would threaten people on Earth. Some years ago there had been some talk about putting nuclear missiles into orbit in space, weapons that could be dropped on any point on Earth. This was not what he was talking about; He would recall that in 1925 in this city of Geneva all of the countries that had participated in World War I had met and had reached agreement not to use poison gas warfare. Nevertheless, all had kept their gas masks. What he was saying now was that we should go forward to rid the world of the threat of nuclear weapons, but at the same time retain something like that gas mask, i.e., a shield that would protect our countries should there be an unforeseeable return to nuclear missiles.

Gorbachev wanted to repeat something he had said at the plenary meeting. He had pointed out that the Soviet Government had really carefully considered everything that had been said by the President with regard to SDI, especially all his arguments in favor of SDI. To a certain extent he could understand the President

on a human level; he could understand that the idea of strategic defense had captivated the President's imagination. However, as a political leader he could not possibly agree with the President with regard to this concept. He would assure the President that this was not the result of some merely capricious attitude. He was not saying this for some sort of petty reasons. On the basis of profound analysis by scientists, Soviet as well as American, he had to conclude that if the Soviet Union were to agree to proceed along the direction of SDI, and this was confirmed by almost all authoritative people, if it were dragged into this new dimension of the arms race, the other side would be bound to lose confidence and would seek to counter SDI in any possible way, including by increasing the numbers of its offensive arms. Thus, it would not make any sense at all for the Soviet Union to help the U.S. in the development of a strategic defense. In addition, he would point out that a defense against one certain level of strategic missiles was one thing, but a defense against a much larger number of such missiles would not be reliable at all. This could only lead to the conclusion that the only possible use of a strategic defense was to defend against a weakened retaliatory strike not against a first strike. It should certainly be realized by the President as well that the great majority of people throughout the world, including scientists, were extremely concerned over the development of space weapons, whatever their avowed purpose. Among such people were a number of U.S. Secretaries of Defense and such experts as Ambassadors Smith and Warnke. Gorbachev knew what they had said about it, he had read their statements and it was clear that strategic defense would only be useful after a first strike by the side deploying such defense. This was a very serious problem today and he would ask the President to reflect on it seriously. The Soviet Union had no desire to harm him as President or to harm the United States as a country. He firmly believed it necessary to do all in his power to prevent this from happening. He would urge the President jointly with him to find a way of formulating guidelines for their negotiators with a view to stopping SDI.

The President thought they had used up a considerable amount of time at this meeting. He thought the plenary meeting was about to conclude in any event, but he would say one thing. He would ask Gorbachev to consider this matter once again. He recognized that both of them had made some strong statements and that it would be difficult for either of them to reverse direction. However, it seemed to him that in his idea of ultimately sharing the results of research there was something that might be of interest to both of them. He had to tell Gorbachev that our people overwhelmingly wanted this defense. They look at the sky and think what might happen if missiles suddenly appear and blow up everything in our country. We believe that the idea of having a defense against nuclear missiles involved a great deal of faith and belief. When he said we, he meant most of mankind.

Gorbachev pointed out that missiles were not yet flying, and whether or not they would fly would depend on how he and the President conducted their respective policies. But if SDI were actually implemented, then layer after layer of

offensive weapons, Soviet as well as U.S. weapons, would appear in outer space and only God himself would know what they were. In this connection he would note that God provides information only very selectively and rarely. He appealed to the President to recognize the true signal he was conveying to him as President and to the U.S. Administration as a whole that the Soviet Union did indeed wish to establish a new relationship with the United States and deliver our two nations from the increasing fear of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had conducted a deep analysis of the entire situation and had come to the conclusion that it was necessary precisely now to proceed on the basis of the actual situation; later it would be too late. This was why the Soviet Union had tabled serious and comprehensive proposals concerning strategic weapons, medium-range weapons and others. This had been the result of a thorough assessment and profound understanding of where the two countries stood today. They now had a chance which they must not fail to take advantage of. He would ask the President not to regard this as weakness on the part of Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership.

During the walk back to the villa *Gorbachev* noted that this would not be their last meeting. *The President* expressed the hope that their next meeting would take place on U.S. soil, and said that he would be pleased to accept an invitation to visit the Soviet Union in return. *Gorbachev* agreed and suggested that dates and modalities be worked out by their respective staffs.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 13: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Dinner Hosted by the Gorbachevs, Geneva,
8:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

November 19, 1985

During the summit, the Gorbachevs reside at the Soviet mission in Geneva, a large compound of buildings including a colorful villa where the Soviet leader and his wife host the Reagans for the first summit dinner. Showing some thoughtful biblical preparation by his speechwriters, Gorbachev uses a quote from Ecclesiastes as his theme—that there is a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones that have been cast in the past. Here the world’s leading atheist (a Reaganite phrase) is calling on the highest spiritual authority to suggest that now the president and he should move to resolve their practical disagreements in the last day of meetings remaining. Reflecting the front page astronomical news of the year (after all, an astrologer for Nancy Reagan had helped pick the dates for Geneva), Reagan responds with a toast calling for cooperation: “if the people of the world were to find out that there was some alien life form that was going to attack the Earth approaching on Halley’s Comet, then that knowledge would unite all peoples of the world.” Gorbachev would remember these words. Reagan’s gracefulness also has its effect when he marks the day as the 43rd anniversary of the Soviet counterattack at Stalingrad, a turning point against Hitler.

At the beginning of the dinner, General Secretary Gorbachev announced that he had invited President Reagan to come to the Soviet Union and President Reagan had extended an invitation to Gorbachev to come to the U.S.A. Both had accepted, but no definite time was set. At that point the ladies announced that they, too, had extended an invitation to each other to come to their respective countries. There was much joking to the effect that Mrs. Reagan could come alone if President Reagan could not make it.

When the caviar was served, President Reagan spoke of sturgeon in the Sacramento River and Gorbachev told Mrs. Reagan of the building of hydroelectric dams on the Volga, which had decimated much of the beluga in the Caspian Sea. They had made some mistakes, he said, but now they were rectified and the fish were thriving.

Mrs. Reagan asked Gorbachev about tourism in the Soviet Union, and he told her at length about the Soviet tourist industry, how it was being built up and expanded, and at the end joked about the fact that tourism not only builds international understanding, but brings foreign currency into the Soviet Union.

Addressing himself to Mrs. Reagan and Mr. McFarlane, Gorbachev spoke of Russian history, about the fact that Russia had acted as a buffer zone for Europe throughout the centuries. Russia itself was invaded by the Mongols of Central

Asia and therefore, he said, “Scratch a Russian and find a Tartar.” Because Russia had been Europe’s buffer, he said, it had fallen behind. It had experienced many invasions, from the Mongols to Napoleon, not to mention two world wars. Nevertheless, Russia has always been able to recuperate from her wounds and build up her strength.

During the course of the dinner, perhaps to encourage his quests’ appetite, Gorbachev quoted the Russian scientist Timiryazev, who said that food was the closest man could come to communing with nature.

Mrs. Gorbachev said that American playwrights were very popular in the Soviet Union, especially Tennessee Williams and Albee. The Gorbachevs had recently seen a Moscow production of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and argued at the table about who had given the better portrayal—Elizabeth Taylor or the Russian actress.

Mrs. Reagan asked about the Soviet film industry and was told by Gorbachev and Korniyenko about the many film studios in various parts of the country. Three of the largest are in Moscow.

Mrs. Reagan asked about drug abuse in the Soviet Union and was told that the drug problem was very small in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev then told her that his anti-alcoholism campaign was a huge success and enjoyed great grass-roots support. Coffee shops and ice cream parlors are becoming profitable ventures because people appear to be enjoying them more than hard liquor. He said that he had thought at the beginning of the campaign that moonshine production would increase, however, they found that since the beginning of the campaign the consumption of sugar has actually gone down. He explained that large amounts of sugar were used in distilling a home brew. Apparently, such activity was not being indulged in.

Mrs. Reagan and Gorbachev spoke of their respective families and Gorbachev said it was his belief that the family was the foundation of society. He felt that there was a risk now of that foundation eroding. Too many people were living together without benefit of marriage, and there were too many single parent families, especially among European Russians. This was not the case in Central Asia, he said, where the average family had 5–6 children and two and even three generations all live together in one house. He said that he meant to speak about family values at the next Party Congress.

IMPROMPTU TOASTS

General Secretary Gorbachev’s Remarks

General Secretary Gorbachev rose and remarked that he was happy to have everyone here together, and there would certainly be no speeches at this dinner. However, he said he wanted at this table this evening, where such a good atmosphere reigned, to welcome the President and Mrs. Reagan. (Mrs. Reagan remarked to the Soviet interpreter that the General Secretary had referred to her as

“Nancy.”) He welcomed President Reagan and his American colleagues to the Soviet Mission, on this “little bit of the Soviet Union.”

He said that everyone present knew the reason why they were in Geneva. Yet, he said the fact that they had relaxed a little bit at this dinner did not mean that they would neglect the reasons why they had come here. He added that his purpose in rising to speak was not to bring up the seriousness of the reasons why they were in Geneva. He said that first, he simply wanted to greet his guests very cordially.

He said that speaking in human terms, he was happy to get acquainted with his guests and he expressed the hope that it would be possible to achieve the kind of understanding and spirit in which it would be possible to discuss “people” problems.

He noted that one day of the meetings had passed, and only one day was left. He said he wanted to recall a line from the Bible to express the Soviet side’s desire as to how the meetings should go. The Biblical quotation was to the effect that there is a time to throw stones, and there is a time to gather them; now is the time to gather stones which have been cast in the past. The seven years in which there were no meetings between the Presidents of the United States and the General Secretaries of the Soviet Union were filled with considerable changes in the world. It would be possible to describe and explain what happened in the world during that time and much could be said by way of explanation. More important than that, however, is the lesson of those times, namely, that the President and the General Secretary must meet and talk about where the two countries are, and how they view each other, and how the two countries intend to build their relations in this many-faceted world of ours. He said that the current day was waning and in a positive atmosphere at that. He noted that the participants had laid out their positions on a broad range of problems of concern to the USSR and the U.S. and to all of the nations of the world. He said he had noticed the word “responsibility” used frequently in relation to this meeting. He said both the President and he understood that the frequent use of that word in itself emphasized the responsibility they bore as world leaders.

He continued that as far as the future is concerned, it can be built, if it is built by the two countries together. That can be done despite all of the countries’ differences and the depth of those differences—that had been visible even in the discussions held today—because the process of moving toward each other through this method of meetings had begun, and it was necessary to continue the process of moving forward.

He said that it was true that one cartoonist had sent him a cartoon which showed him and President Reagan standing on the two sides of the abyss. On one side was President Reagan and on the other side was Gorbachev. Reagan calls to Gorbachev across the abyss “Gorby, I am prepared to go my part of the way,” and “Gorby” says to Reagan, “Come ahead.” Joking aside, he said, if the two leaders go their part of the way together, they will not end up in the abyss finally, but rather with a higher degree of understanding and trust that will be the basis of the long-term outlook of U.S.-Soviet relations.

He continued that there are certain questions without whose examination it would be difficult to leave Geneva, and he recalled the Nobel prize winner's letter saying that he and the President should stay in Geneva as long as necessary to resolve the questions of war and peace. (He said he thought at that rate they would be there until Christmas.) He added that, seriously, there were problems which would require thinking and an overall approach. If those questions are not addressed, it will be difficult to go on, and there will be more accusations and recrimination. It is evident that the people of the world are sick and tired of the mutual accusations and recriminations the U.S. and the USSR addressed at each other.

He said that he could not say for sure that the sides would reach agreement in the course of the current meetings, even if they worked all night. (He jokingly suggested that all the others ought to work all night.) He suggested that, jokes aside, he and the President should nevertheless continue to work to accomplish the necessary goals.

He said he wished to raise a toast to the President, to Nancy Reagan, and to the U.S. people, whom the Soviet people regard so highly; he wished to drink to the success of the current talks, to an improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations, and to the resolution of outstanding problems between the sides.

President Reagan's Response

In response to General Secretary Gorbachev's remarks, President Reagan said that the American delegation was pleased to be here in Geneva on this mission.

He said that while the General Secretary was speaking, he had been thinking of various problems being discussed at the talks. He said that previous to the General Secretary's remarks, he had been telling Foreign Minister Shevardnadze (who was seated to the President's right) that if the people of the world were to find out that there was some alien life form that was going to attack the Earth approaching on Halley's Comet, then that knowledge would unite all the peoples of the world.

Further, the President observed that General Secretary Gorbachev had cited a Biblical quotation, and the President, also alluding to the Bible, pointed out that Acts 16 refers to the fact that "we are all of one blood regardless of where we live on the Earth," and we should never forget that.

The President quoted Theodore Roosevelt to the effect that the true goal of nations is peace with self respect. Theodore Roosevelt loved his people as the current U.S. President and General Secretary love theirs, and Roosevelt believed in peace and security for his people, although some of his detractors would construe that to mean that there was something militaristic in his attitude. Yet despite some such negative attitudes about him, he had been the first person to win the Nobel Prize for peace, and that was specifically for his efforts devoted to ending the Russo-Japanese War.

The President pointed out that there was something else significant about this particular time and this particular occasion. It was exactly 43 years ago on this date that the Soviet Army had begin [sic] the counterattack at Stalingrad which had actually turned the war around. The President suggested that this 43rd anniversary of that event could also be the beginning of yet another turning point for all mankind—one that would make it possible to have a world of peace and freedom.

The President raised his glass to the General Secretary and Mrs. Gorbachev, to the Soviet people, to peace, freedom, to our great nations, and to the peoples of the world—that they may have a world of peace and freedom.

* * *

Gorbachev Family

The Gorbachevs have been married one year longer than the Reagans. Their daughter, a doctor, wrote her thesis in medical school on the effects of alcohol on the human system. Their son-in-law is a surgeon. Their daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter live with them. Gorbachev said that he was a man of conservative values when it came to keeping the family together. Their granddaughter, who will be six in January, knows all of the world leaders, he said. She watches the news broadcasts and periodically asks where Mrs. Thatcher is going now. Mrs. Gorbachev added that the granddaughter watches two TV programs: “Good Night, Children” and “Vremya,” a news broadcast.

Gorbachev said that he and Mrs. Gorbachev had taken two, apparently private, vacations to Italy and France. They toured each country by car for 21 days.

Gorbachev told Mrs. Reagan about a vacation to the Crimea that Mrs. Gorbachev had taken with her granddaughter. They visited the palace of an ancient khan, where they learned that the khan had 200 wives. Upon her return to Moscow, the granddaughter asked Gorbachev why the khan had 200 wives and he had only one. Gorbachev replied that the khan did not have a single philosopher among his wives, and he did not know what to do with the single one he had.

Prepared by:
Eugenia Arensburger and William Hopkins,
Department of State

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 14: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Third Private Meeting, Geneva,
10:15 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

November 20, 1985

Now the Geneva summit scene shifts completely to the Soviet compound, site of the dinner the night before, and again the two leaders begin the day with a private meeting, including only interpreters. Scheduled for a mere quarter hour, it runs for 70 minutes. This conversation is the venue for Reagan's human rights lecture, but it takes on a different style completely from his speeches. Here the American leader promises never to take credit for any Soviet responsiveness on individual cases, signals his understanding that quiet diplomacy is far more effective, cites the release of the Pentecostals who had been marooned in the U.S. embassy in Moscow, and generally bends over backwards to tell Gorbachev: this is really important to me, and to the American people and the Congress; progress here will really help. But Gorbachev still sees propaganda in every mention of human rights, no matter how quiet and private. Pressure from Congress or interest groups is just a pretext, he says; to which Reagan shakes his head: you exaggerate the power of the president.

After the photo opportunity in an adjoining room, General Secretary Gorbachev invited President Reagan to join him in a small room next to the main meeting room while the rest of the delegation took their seats, after which he and the President could join them.

President Reagan told the General Secretary that he wanted to talk with him privately about a subject which he knew that the Soviet side considered to be interference in its internal affairs. The President stressed that he did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, but he did want to speak with Gorbachev about human rights.

The President indicated that in the U.S. system of government many of the things that we would hope to accomplish with the Soviet Union would require the support of the Congress, which, in turn, is influenced by the people of the country. He could get such support if some things were done in the area of human rights. In the U.S., as Gorbachev knew, we have people from all over the world. Many of them retain a pride in their heritage, with regard to the countries where their parents and ancestors came from.

The President said that religious groups in the U.S. tend to influence Congress through lobby groups. An example of strong attachment to religious celebration occurred in the U.S. on St. Patrick's Day. This was a special holiday for the Irish, and Reagan's father had come from Ireland. Other groups in the U.S., such as

Ukrainian Americans, Lithuanian Americans and Polish Americans have their organizations, customs and holidays.

The President said that he did not wish to raise this issue in the main meeting. He was also not asking to get Gorbachev's agreement to publicly announce actions which were being taken to deal with difficulties in this area, such as emigration. The recent release of several men and women who were allowed to join their spouses had made a big impact on the people in the U.S., but the President wished to be frank and said that the question then arose—why not the rest? An example of such an issue was the desire of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel. There was a large Jewish community in the U.S., which had an influence on Congress.

The President told Gorbachev that if he could resolve some of these issues on his own, the President would never boast that the Soviet side had given in to the U.S. We would express our appreciation for what was done, and there would be no hint that this was done as a result of U.S. efforts. But the fact that something was done would make it easier for the President to do the type of things which the two countries could do together, such as in the area of trade, for which the President needed Congressional support.

The President said that he wished to give an example of this type of approach. In 1981, during his first year in office, the Soviet government was eager to have a new long-term grain agreement with the U.S., after the imposition of the grain embargo by Reagan's predecessor. The President had sat down with the Soviet Ambassador and had spoken with him about human rights concerns, citing the specific example of the Pentecostals who had been living for five years in the basement of the Moscow Embassy. If they had left the embassy, they would have been taken by the police. They had come to the Embassy because they had gotten into trouble after having asked for permission to emigrate. The President told the Ambassador that he would not speak publicly about this, but there would be a better chance to have a grain agreement, since there was opposition in the U.S. to such an agreement, if something were done to free those people. Shortly after that, they left the Embassy and emigrated to the U.S. The President never told anyone that he had done this. Those people were gratefully received in the U.S., and they did not even know that the President had spoken on their behalf. A short time later, the long-term grain agreement was concluded without difficulties in Congress, and this agreement is in place today.

The President indicated that this was the type of thing which he was seeking here and that is why he did not wish to raise these issues in the full meeting, not to make it appear that he was trying to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. It would make it easier for us to do the type of things that we could do together if he were not constantly reminded about the restrictions imposed on Soviet people, the refusal to permit them to practice their religion, etc. The President would not tell anyone that he had raised this issue with Gorbachev.

Gorbachev replied that he considered that at some stage of U.S.–Soviet relations, the issue of human rights was being used for political purposes, not only

by representatives of various political organizations which were anti-Soviet, but, and this came as a surprise, also by officials of the U.S. Administration, including the President. The Soviets side did not understand this. The President had mentioned why and how he had come to be involved in these issues. Gorbachev wished to say in all sincerity that the Soviet Union was in favor of broader contacts, exchange of people—scientists, cultural representatives, all types of people—with the U.S. The Soviet side felt that this was necessary, and Gorbachev thought that Reagan had said the same. The two countries depended on each other today and would in the future. We should get to know each other better and create a good atmosphere. The Soviet people have no enmity for the American people. The Soviet people have a positive attitude toward the people of the United States. If we work at this on the basis of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other country, the Soviet side would be ready to broaden its contacts with the U.S. It is truly interested in doing so. But what we need first is an atmosphere of good will between the countries. This was the fundamental question.

Gorbachev then went on to give specific examples. People from the U.S. travel to the Soviet Union and vice versa. People in the U.S. have relatives in the USSR, and they come visit the places of their origin, such as the Ukraine, the Baltic States, and so on. The Soviet Union welcomes this and is open to such visits. There are no difficulties in this regard. Lately, there has been an increase in contacts between representatives of religious groups. The Soviet side was in favor of this. There were marriages between U.S. and Soviet citizens. This was a very natural and understandable thing, and there were no objections to this. Since the group of U.S. Senators that had met with him before this meeting in Geneva had mentioned these issues, Gorbachev had looked into them. During the past five years more than 400 marriages had taken place, and out of these, only ten people had not been permitted to emigrate. The only obstacle to emigration is involvement of the person in question with state secrets. In this case, the state has a specific responsibility, but it tries to let time pass, to let the individual do different kind of work so that his knowledge becomes outdated. His case is then returned too [sic], and he is released. Gorbachev repeated that within the past five years restrictions have been placed only on ten of 420 to 450 people. But these were Soviet regulations, and the Soviet side asked that they be respected. This was one example.

Gorbachev continued that the President had mentioned Jews. The fate of Jewish people was of concern to the Soviet government. There are many Jews in the Soviet Union, as there are in the U.S. (which has the greatest number) and in other countries. After what the Fascists had done to the Jews, the Soviet Union had done everything it could to give them special attention, and it had not regretted doing so. Since many Jewish families had been separated, difficulties existed because of this, and the Soviet side tried to examine such cases. But when such issues are mixed in with discussion of the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union in general, this is not right. Then the Soviet side objects and furnishes data to back up what it says. This has been the Soviet Union's approach in all cases,

including in its discussions with the U.S. The Soviet Union was willing to look at specific cases, but when these things are used for political aims, they would be rebuffed. Specific cases would be examined quietly, in a humane way.

Gorbachev said that when a U.S. Congressional delegation had visited the USSR at the invitation of the Supreme Soviet, the two bodies had agreed to establish a permanent group to examine such issues, and the Soviet side was in favor of this, but would not permit this issue to be used for political aims.

The President said that with regard to Jews and other religious groups, there were restrictions in the Soviet Union on their ability to practice their religion, e.g., Jews were not permitted to teach Hebrew. In the U.S., in addition to attending the usual schools, Jewish families sent their children to their own schools to study their ancient language. Perhaps some people would not think of emigrating from the Soviet Union if they were allowed to practice their religion.

The President continued that with regard to other questions, the two countries had signed the Helsinki Accords which assured certain freedoms, such as family reunification and the right to emigrate. However, our two countries were big ones, with very large bureaucracies. It was not possible for Gorbachev or the President to know everything that went on at the lower levels, where people could make decisions which were contrary to the desires of leadership.

The President said that Gorbachev had mentioned that only ten people had not been permitted to rejoin their spouses. But he had a much larger list of cases of separated families. He also wished to give Gorbachev one more example of a case in this category. He knew of a piano player, a young man in the Soviet Union, who wished to emigrate to Israel. Not only was he denied such permission, but he was also denied permission to play the piano with major orchestras, and his records could no longer be sold in stores. His career had been destroyed as a result of the fact that he had wished to emigrate. The bureaucracy could do many things of which Gorbachev was not aware. This man had a wife and a small child. Apparently, he and his wife had been told that they could emigrate, but the baby would have to remain. Since the child was only one year old, they certainly could not have left him behind, so they did not emigrate.

Gorbachev said that he would like to ask the President about the following. For the Soviet leadership and for everyone in Soviet society it was clear whose side the President was on in the area of human rights. The President always spoke of the lack of human rights in socialist countries. In other countries there was democracy and everything was okay. Since people were aware of the rights situation in the Soviet Union and in other countries, and could compare the situations, why was the President taking this point of view. If other people said this, this might be understandable, but the President always said that there is a clear distinction, namely, that there are no rights in socialist countries, but they are in bloom in the democracies. This caused consternation.

Gorbachev continued that at the level of General Secretary and President one should be responsible and call things by their proper names, no matter where they occur. If things are painted only in black and white, this would only inflame

the distrust between the countries. He thought that it would be better to take steps to improve the general atmosphere of our relationship, and then specific humanitarian issues could quickly be resolved. The Soviet Union was prepared to resolve them. But if questions of human rights were used for political purposes, the Soviet side would rebuff such attempts. He repeated that the Soviet Union was ready to examine specific cases, especially those mentioned by the President.

The President replied that he was trying to clearly indicate if such changes occurred, he would not indicate that he was the one that persuaded Gorbachev to do this. He realized that both of them had concerns about their political image, namely, that they did not want to have it seem that they were giving in to outside influences. He wished to assure Gorbachev that he would have no such problems with the President. What happens is that various groups in the United States have relatives and families in other countries, and they get information from these people. Then organizations deliver this to the President and demand that their grievances be resolved with regard to people in the Soviet Union. These things make their way to the press, and he could not do anything about that since the U.S. has a free press. He was trying to say that we could work better together if such issues did not appear on the front pages, but rather if he spoke with Gorbachev about these things confidentially.

Gorbachev replied that he welcomed the President's decision to have such a private meeting. He had heard him out, and the President had heard him out as well, and the two of them would bear in mind what had been said.

The President indicated that he would like to make one last point. With regard to what Gorbachev had said about issues like this in the U.S., the President wished to say that in the U.S. there are laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, national origin, sex and race.

Gorbachev interjected that he was familiar with the state of things in the U.S. The President had said that there was no discrimination on the basis of sex. This was not true. According to U.S. law a woman could make 60 percent of the salary a man made for the same job. The President had spoken of equality. But so much time had passed since the American Revolution, and women still did not have the same rights as men. He knew this to be the case. He was informed. He had a legal education. The President should not think that he saw only the negative aspects of things in a primitive way. He saw things from a broad perspective, and he was responsible. He supported the rights of families. If there was a need, we should have exchanges and see what could be done about specific problems. But if we are referring to changing laws, with other interests in mind, this could not be done. The Soviet people set their laws. Any other approach shows a disrespect for the Soviet people. This must be the basic framework. The U.S. had its own system, and the Soviet Union had its own. The President would defend the United States, and he, Gorbachev, will defend the Soviet Union. Such a discussion could take a very long time.

The President replied that there were differences in our economic system and in our societies. Gorbachev had mentioned the question of women's rights.

The President noted parenthetically that women own more than 50 percent of all wealth in the United States. But the difference in the systems was that, yes, there were individuals, perhaps employers in factories, with personal prejudices about hiring women, blacks, and so on. But the law says that there can be no discrimination. So what various groups indicate that there are those who discriminate, the government must abide by the law and punish those individuals. No U.S. law permits discrimination—quite the contrary.

The President continued that he had spoken about the bureaucracy. He wished to recall that when he was Governor, he learned from one of his assistants that the latter had taken some young black people to the State Labor office to fill out some job applications (the President explained that there was a Department of Labor in California, which helped people to find jobs). When the applicants had subsequently been questioned about whether they had filled out the applications correctly, one said that he had not. Reagan's assistant took the man back and asked to see his application. They could not find it. Then the man to whom they had been talking slowly edged over to the wastebasket and pulled the application out of it. The Governor was not the one responsible for this. It was one prejudiced clerk who had thrown the application into the wastebasket.

Gorbachev said that people in the U.S. should live as they like. If they choose something, the Soviets would not judge them. The U.S. had many achievements, and the USSR would not interfere in its internal affairs. But the U.S. should do the same with regard to the USSR.

The President said that it would be easier for him to fulfill some of the possible agreements between the two countries if he were not beset by people in the U.S. Congress and by organizations that hear of their relatives and friends and complain about the restraints which they consider should not be imposed upon them, such as with respect to the right to live in other places or the right to emigrate. So if *Gorbachev* would think about these things, the President would have more freedom to work together.

Gorbachev said that he had heard the President's thoughts, but he could not agree that the President was so dependent on the opinion of small groups. He knew what the President could do as a political leader when he wanted to. When he did not want to, he would talk about pressure groups, and so on. The Soviet side saw all of this. If [sic] had a realistic view of life, and asked the U.S. side to have a realistic view of the USSR.

The President said that he realized that it was difficult for the General Secretary, within his system, to believe the President that he, *Gorbachev*, was wrong about the President's power. In the U.S. system, including during the time after he had become President, one part of the Congress, i.e., the House of Representatives, was dominated by the opposition party.

Gorbachev interrupted, without listening to the translation, to say that he had understood what the President had said, and that he took all of this into account. He was familiar with the American political process, and the President should not hide behind this. (U.S. Interpreter's Note: *Gorbachev's* indication that he

had understood what the President had said without translation was unexpected, since he had never shown any indication of understanding English in previous or subsequent conversations. After the President's following remarks, Gorbachev specifically asked for interpretation and looked like he had not understood what the President had said. I think that the first time he was simply assuming that he knew what the President was saying, and was anxious to get into the plenary meeting.)

The President indicated that there were things which he was not able to get approved at the present time because of his opposition, which based its position on what was said by lobby groups.

Gorbachev said that the President had talked about certain issues and he, Gorbachev[,] had expressed his views.

The President interjected that with regard to some cases involving individuals Gorbachev could make it easier for him with regard to the relationship between the two countries.

Gorbachev said that he was glad that they had a private talk and that this had let them get to know each other better, and this was important. When the two of them would communicate, especially about the larger political issues, they would know what the other one looked like, and the image of the other person would be present when decisions would be made.

Prepared by:
Dimitri Zarechnak,
Department of State

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC System Files.]

Document No. 15: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Third Plenary Meeting, Geneva,
11:30 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.

November 20, 1985

When the two leaders rejoin their delegations, they reprise the SDI impasse from the day before, with even greater temper on Gorbachev's part. Reagan presents a detailed U.S. program on strategic arms reductions and the notion of an interim INF agreement, and Gorbachev agrees to the idea of reductions, but emphasizes yet again that the Soviet Union cannot agree to proposals that would jeopardize Soviet security—meaning Reagan's insistence on SDI. Gorbachev cannot understand why Reagan would keep focusing on the possibility of SDI when the Soviet side finds it so threatening and unacceptable. And yet again, Reagan responds (quite sincerely, yet without acknowledging his own defense establishment would resist) with a proposal that whoever develops a feasible defense system should share it; that way the threat would be eliminated. Instead of taking Reagan at his word, and acquiring details and commitments about sharing SDI technology, Gorbachev gives his agreement to a separate INF deal and to deep cuts, but only under the condition that the United States would not develop a strategic defense system because that would mean building a new class of weapons to be put in space.

After the press had been ushered out of the meeting room, Gorbachev invited President Reagan to lead off.

The President noted that he wished to address a number of items which there had not been time for the previous day. He would open with a few words on the Geneva arms control negotiations.

The President observed that our peoples were particularly concerned by nuclear missiles, which, if the button were pushed, could kill millions in a matter of minutes. It was important to show our people that we were concerned.

We had therefore shaped our proposal on strategic offensive systems so as to achieve deep reductions, focusing in particular on what we think are destabilizing weapons. Our proposals dealt with a number of delivery systems: ICBMs, SLBMs, etc. It built upon the fifty percent reduction concept contained in the Soviet counterproposal. It also incorporated reductions to 4,500 ballistic missile warheads and a limit on ALCMs of 1,500; the overall sum would be the 6,000 figure that the Soviets had proposed.

The U.S. had to insist, however, that the reductions be applied to the proper categories of systems. We could not agree to the Soviet proposed definition of “strategic delivery systems” or any definition that included within a common limit a category of delivery systems on the US side while excluding it on the Soviet side. The two sides, of course, had a long negotiating history on this issue, so

the President would not repeat the U.S. rationale, but rather restate its insistence on the definition agreed upon in past strategic offensive arms agreements as to the categories of systems to be included in limits on strategic offensive arms.

The aggregate result of the reductions and limits we proposed for strategic offensive arms would be a more stable world in which the number of these arms would be radically reduced to comparable levels on both sides, the threat to the retaliatory capabilities of each side would be significantly diminished, and the prospects of verification would be enhanced. The President stressed that verification was vital if we were to reduce suspicion between our two governments.

In the area of intermediate-range nuclear arms, the U.S. proposal built, in part, on Soviet ideas. The U.S. was prepared to cap US LRINF missiles in Europe at the level deployed as of December 31, 1985, in return for your agreement to reduce your LRINF missile launchers within range of NATO Europe to the same launcher number. The U.S. would be prepared to discuss with the USSR the exact mix of these systems. The U.S. proposal included reductions in the number of SS-20 launchers located in Asia and outside range of NATO Europe. The end result, the President stressed in conclusion, would be that both sides would be limited to an equal global LRINF missile warhead number.

Before moving onto other issues, the President offered Gorbachev a chance to respond.

Gorbachev indicated that he did, in fact, have a few comments. The Soviets had carefully assessed the U.S. NST proposal. They welcomed the U.S. agreement to accept 50 percent reductions in nuclear strategic arsenals. It was of fundamental importance to note any basis for moving ahead in the search for mutually acceptable proposals which could be components of possible agreements.

But Gorbachev also had some critical observations to make regarding practically all the elements of the Soviet proposal. He did not wish to dramatize this. He believed that this approach coincided with the President's own in welcoming the basic thrust of Soviet proposals for radical reductions, while not welcoming other elements. Both sides now had proposals on the table. There was plenty to work with.

Reiterating that he did not want to dramatize differences in the two sides' approach, Gorbachev stressed that the Soviet Union truly desired a serious search for mutually acceptable proposals. He stressed that the Soviet Union was not proposing elements which would be unacceptable to the U.S., which could jeopardize U.S. security, since this would make it impossible to reach agreements in the future. But the Soviets expected the same treatment from the United States. If the U.S. advanced proposals which sought to undermine Soviet security, it would make agreement impossible and complicate future work in this area.

There were elements in the U.S. proposal, however, which clearly departed from the January 1985 U.S.-Soviet understanding on the goals and subjects of the Geneva talks. On the one hand, the President and his colleagues asserted that the U.S. had not departed from this understanding, that the U.S. was in favor of radical reductions in defensive nuclear weapons and in favor of preventing an arms race in space.

The President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was regarded by the U.S. as consistent with the January understanding. This was a "revelation" to the Soviets. No matter under what flag the U.S. chose to cover it, SDI amounted to placing weapons in space, to spreading the arms race to space. This view devalued the remaining elements of the U.S. proposals. What purpose could be served by radical reductions if the U.S. contemplated deploying weapons in space—with all the attendant consequences.

When the Soviets had proposed that the two sides agree to close the door to deployments of weapons in space, it was consistent with both the U.S. and USSR's security interests. Gorbachev noted that the U.S. had claimed the Soviet Union was ahead in scientific research on space questions; if so, the U.S. should want to stop the process now. As the U.S. did not, Soviet superiority in space research did not appear to be the problem.

Gorbachev felt he had to say that he did not know what lay at the bottom of the U.S. position. How the U.S. had come to its position was not important to him, however. What was important to him was the position itself. Gorbachev was concerned that the position was fed by an illusion: that the U.S. was ahead in the technology and information transfer systems on which space systems would be based, and that a possibility therefore existed to obtain military superiority over the USSR. The U.S. might even consider it possible to obtain a first-strike capability, or, under certain circumstances, to launch a first strike. The Soviet Union needed to consider worst cases in developing its policies.

Gorbachev told the President that he had recently observed to a Soviet scientist that he could see no reason why the President should be committed to SDI. Gorbachev had wondered why the President could have any interest in injecting a new element of instability into the relationship, in further exacerbating U.S.-Soviet relations. The scientist had said that she had done research into the matter and found the explanation: SDI would produce from 600 billion to a trillion dollars in new military expenditures. That was the reason.

With mounting urgency, Gorbachev said he must return again to the problem of SDI, even at the risk of injecting some tension into the discussion. He did not want to do this. But he could not ignore the importance of the problem. Gorbachev expressed regret that the U.S. appeared determined to depart from the January agreement on stopping the arms race on earth and preventing it in space. If the U.S. departed from that road, Gorbachev did not know when it would be possible for the two countries to meet on it again. Everything at the Geneva NST talks would come to a halt. For its part, the Soviet Union remained committed to the goals of the January understanding, and was prepared to do everything possible to achieve them.

The President stated that the scientist Gorbachev had referred to was dealing with a fantasy. She reminded the President of the scientists who had told President Eisenhower that ICBMs would never work.

The President underscored that SDI was not a weapons system or a plan for conducting a war in space. It was an effort to find a more civilized means

of deterring war than reliance on thousands of nuclear missiles which, if used, would kill millions on both sides. Never before in history had the possibility existed of a war which would bring about the end of civilization.

Even if the two sides reduced offensive arms by 50 percent, there would still be too many weapons. The U.S. did not see in SDI a means of obtaining military advantage over the Soviet Union. The benefits of SDI research would be for the USSR as well as the U.S. If defensive systems could be found, they would be available to all. This would end the nuclear nightmare for the U.S. people, the Soviet people, all people. The Soviet Union and the United States had the capability to move beyond simply aiming weapons at each other with the risk of ending the world as we know it. As to the argument that the U.S. sought to build an offensive arsenal, the U.S. objective was that whoever developed a feasible defensive system would share it, so that any threat to the other side would be eliminated. If there was opposition to that concept, the President speculated it might be based on the assumption that nuclear weapons might, at some point, be used. The U.S., on the other hand, was seeking a security system based on "shield," not "spears" or missiles. Under the current system of deterrence, it would be impossible to tell the winner from the loser in the event of war.

Gorbachev replied that he understood the President's arguments but found them unconvincing. They contained many emotional elements, elements which were part of one man's dream. *Gorbachev* did not wish to suggest that the President did not want peace. But the fact was that SDI would result in the appearance of weapons in space. They might be built as anti-missile weapons, but they would have the capability of striking earth. The USSR could never know for sure. The Soviets had agreed on 50 percent reductions in nuclear weapons. But the President was advocating a whole new class of weapons. Describing these weapons as a shield was only packaging. They would open a new arms race in space. The President would be held responsible.

Gorbachev said that there were dreams of peace and there were realities. He did not believe the President saw him as a bloodthirsty person who wanted to drag his country into conflict. The Soviet Union was for reducing the number of weapons. History would remember the President, as well as the Soviet leader, for having begun to eliminate nuclear weapons. But agreement had not yet been reached. And now SDI threatened to open a new arms race.

The President observed that, under the U.S. open laboratories concept, scientists from both sides could satisfy themselves that SDI research was not being directed toward the development of an offensive capability. *Gorbachev* shot back his agreement that laboratories should be opened, but only if the development of space weapons had first been banned. *The President* reiterated that Soviet scientists would be able to verify by visiting U.S. laboratories whether the U.S. was building destructive weapons or a shield. The U.S. was after a shield.

This got to the point that it was necessary for the two countries to get beyond suspicions. The President asked whether he would not be justified in suspecting that, under certain circumstances, the Soviets would use their missiles against

the U.S. Words could not reduce the idea of a threat from one side to another. The Soviet interpretation was that SDI would lead to the development of new offensive weapons. The U.S. was trying simply to see if there was a way to end the world's nightmare about nuclear weapons. The President emphasized that the U.S. would share its research with the Soviet Union; attempts to develop destructive weapons would be discovered.

Gorbachev asked the President with some emotion why he would not believe him when he said the Soviet Union would never attack. Before the President could respond, Gorbachev repeated the question. He again interrupted the President's answer to insist on a response.

The President stated that no individual could say to the U.S. people that they should rely on his personal faith rather than on sound defense. Gorbachev questioned the sincerity of the President's willingness to share SDI research, pointing out that the U.S. did not share its most advanced technology even with its allies.

Gorbachev called for a more realistic discussion. The Soviet Union was prepared to compromise. But the U.S. had the impression that the USSR was weak and could be painted into a corner. That was an illusion. There would soon be a disillusionment; perhaps not in the President's time, but ultimately. The President would be held responsible. SDI would open a new sphere for the arms race. Why was this necessary?

The Soviet Union had said it would agree to a separate INF agreement, to deep cuts. These had not been easy decisions. The Soviets had their concerns. But they felt that if steps were not taken in the next year to 18 months, the consequences would be grave. The President wanted to catch the "Firebird" of SDI by using the U.S. technical advantage. There would be disillusionment, but it would come too late, as the "infernal" train would already be moving.

Gorbachev observed that perhaps his remarks had grown a bit heated. He had meant only to convey to the President the depth of Soviet concern on this issue.

The President replied that, with all due respect, Gorbachev's concerns were based on a false premise. Overcoming several interruptions from Gorbachev, the President reaffirmed that the U.S. would be prepared to reduce nuclear weapons to zero and ultimately to eliminate them. The fact was, however, that they still existed. A defensive shield was therefore necessary. He compared nuclear weapons to chemical weapons. Conventions had been negotiated to ban the use of chemical weapons, but gas masks had been retained. With a defensive shield against nuclear weapons, people would have an additional guarantee against their use. The President could not see how SDI research could be interpreted as threatening to human life or targets on earth. Moreover, he repeated, the ultimate idea was to share SDI research; neither nation would be able to use it to develop a first-strike capability.

Gorbachev alleged that the U.S., under the guise of a shield, intended to introduce weapons into space. The Soviet Union must base its policies on this fact. The Soviets could not be sure what the U.S. ultimately had in mind. The fact was that to destroy weapons other weapons were necessary. The President countered

that no one was sure whether SDI would work; the U.S. effort was designed only to find out if a defense was possible. Gorbachev said that this meant only that the U.S. was seeking to determine if space weapons were possible.

The President explained that his instructions to those responsible for SDI research had been to find out if there were a means to stop nuclear missiles. He had said that if such a means existed, the U.S. would share it with other countries so as to make nuclear weapons unnecessary. He was aware that SDI research dealt with systems such as lasers and particle beam devices which had weapons applications. These systems, however, were designed not to kill people, but to stop nuclear missiles from reaching their target. The President noted that the Soviet Union already had the world's most developed ABM system.

Gorbachev said he felt it inappropriate in their conversation to inject banalities more in keeping with press conferences. The Soviet ABM system was in compliance with the ABM Treaty. The Soviet Union had chosen to place its system around its capital; the U.S. had placed its near missile fields. The USSR was scrupulous in complying with treaties dealing with nuclear weapons. It was too dangerous to engage in deceptions in this area. *The President* agreed, noting that the U.S. had raised the question of Krasnoyarsk radar and its possible battle management role. He asked Gorbachev whether the U.S. expression of willingness to share its SDI research did not adequately deal with Soviet suspicions.

Gorbachev indicated that the President already had the Soviet assessment of the U.S. position. Gorbachev wanted to emphasize it because it was the key question of their meeting. It would define the future political dialogue between the two countries, the nature of the Geneva negotiations, the outcome of important decisions on domestic policy in both countries. It appeared that the President was very committed to the development, testing, and deployment of space weapons. The Soviets would have to consider and base their policy on this fact. The Soviets had heard similar views expressed by many of the President's advisers. But these were only advisers. The President had the ultimate responsibility. Gorbachev sometimes had felt that the President's advisers feared the President's prestige would suffer if he gave up SDI. Gorbachev was "500 percent" convinced that the President would in fact benefit from such a decision.

The President expressed concern that the discussion had gone too far and suggested a more reasonable approach. The two sides had agreed to a reduction in strategic offensive weapons of 50 percent. It was unfortunate that this was being frustrated because the Soviets objected to an attempt to determine if there was a defense against nuclear missiles. It would be years before this was known. We had made clear our willingness to share SDI research. There was no reason why such research should prevent us from going ahead with reductions in nuclear forces.

The President did not know whether or not Gorbachev believed in reincarnation. Perhaps the President in a previous life had been the inventor of the shield. In any case, the President believed that trust and prospects for peace would improve if both sides began to rely more on defense, with offensive weapons being reduced.

Gorbachev asked rhetorically what was the result of the Geneva talks thus far. There had been negotiations, with the objectives and subjects clearly determined: to stop the arms race on earth and prevent its spread to space. The Soviets had felt that the work done thus far in Geneva would enable the two leaders to give an impulse to the process in their own meeting. The leaders had now met and it seemed clear that the President felt that weapons could be introduced into space. *Gorbachev* feared the negotiations would go by the wayside in this case. What, he asked, was to be done.

The President replied that, where *Gorbachev* saw a threat, we saw an opportunity. We should both seek to reduce offensive arms by 50 percent and to determine if defense was possible. We could then sit down and decide if deployment was desirable. We would share our findings. Was that not a fair deal? The Soviet Union would be aware of our arms program. We would look at the Soviets's [sic]. We were talking about several years. Would people not, the President asked, be more confident that a defense would work if both sides reduced by 50 percent.

Gorbachev asked that the President not treat the Soviets as "simple people." *The President* replied that he did not see how he had in any way shown disrespect or charged the Soviets with naivety. He had explored the various issues with *Gorbachev* as openly as possible. He could see no logical argument against going ahead with research when we have made clear that we will not have a monopoly on defense if a feasible solution is found.

Gorbachev questioned why it was necessary to conduct research when nuclear weapons were being reduced—and by 50 percent as a first step. SDI was torpedoing the possibility of steps to reduce nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union wanted to lock the door against space weapons—to bar it or even drive in nails—and then begin reductions. The Soviets did not know what weapons might be developed by researchers. If the past was any guide, they would find things they had not expected to find. The Soviets had repeatedly shown in recent months their willingness to seek reasonable solutions. The U.S. approach could only lead to an expansion of the arms race on earth and in space.

The President denied this. He stressed that the U.S. was prepared to open its laboratories to demonstrate that it was not seeking a new offensive potential. *Gorbachev* interrupted to state that the Soviets were looking for a way out. They were serious. The President countered that the way out was to reduce and not to miss the opportunity to develop a defense because of fear that it might have an offensive potential.

Gorbachev asked if the President had money to spare. *The President* replied no. *Gorbachev* said he knew that. The President had in the past expressed the view that SDI could be used to prevent "some madman" from using a nuclear weapon. The U.S. and USSR should reduce their own weapons by 50 percent and then have other countries join them. More could be done with the NPT Treaty. Ways could be found to prevent madmen. Because of one madman, should we have an arms race in space?

The President again wondered why the Soviets should object to research. At this point, we were only talking about a theory. We were also talking about safeguards. If the problem appeared to be solvable, then we could talk. But both sides would for the moment retain nuclear weapons. Reductions would make it possible to save considerable expenditures, e.g., for modernization.

Gorbachev expressed his regret that the two leaders would have so little positive to say on the Geneva talks. The President replied that the U.S. would have to tell people that the possibility of reducing nuclear arms by 50 percent had been destroyed by suspicion of ulterior motives. *Gorbachev* noted that strategic defense was the President's idea; it was hard to dispute the notion that the Geneva negotiations were based on the January understanding, which deal with two elements: stopping the arms race on earth and preventing it in space. After his discussion with the President, it was clear that the U.S. was determined to develop and introduce weapons into space.

The President said that the U.S. side would tell a different story. We would say that current effort to develop a system that would not kill people, but only stop missiles, was the cause of Soviet suspicions which had prevented reductions of nuclear weapons. An opportunity was thus being lost. The President felt that public opinion would find that difficult to understand.

Gorbachev said that this was the U.S. assessment. But it was important the leaders deal in substance not propaganda. The Soviet side had expected that, when the two leaders met, after months of preparation, it would be possible to reach solutions and to clarify what had been agreed to in January.

Noting that they had already run over the allotted time, *the President* urged *Gorbachev* to consider further the safeguards the President had mentioned. It would reassure publics in both countries if the leaders could agree on this and go forward with reductions in nuclear weapons. The President had no further elaborations other than to repeat his inability to comprehend how, in a world full of nuclear weapons, it was so horrifying to seek to develop a defense against this awful threat, how an effort to reduce nuclear weapons could break down because of such an attempt.

Gorbachev for his part, questioned how, in such a difficult situation and with the threat that the arms race would expand in the absence of restraints, one could contemplate a new arms race in space. It was not even possible to reduce armaments on earth. What could be done when weapons were orbiting the globe? How could one verify this? *Gorbachev* could not commit himself to developing such systems.

The President said it was necessary to give each side the freedom to look at what the other was doing. He recalled President Eisenhower's "Open Skies" proposal in expressing disappointment at the Soviet Government's one-sided approach to verification.

Gorbachev suggested that the two sides think about and analyze the thorough discussion which had taken place. It might be possible to return to the subject that afternoon. He reiterated that he saw no obstacles to movement towards a

solution which might serve both sides' interests. The President urged Gorbachev to consider the verification ideas he had shared. Gorbachev indicated his willingness to do so, but stressed that what was being verified was important. The Soviets would be prepared to verify an end to nuclear testing; they would not be willing to verify a continuation of such tests. They would be similarly willing to verify a prohibition of space-strike weapons, but not a process by which such weapons would be developed, whether through open laboratories or other means. But in principle, they were open on the question.

The President again urged Gorbachev to consider whether he could not accept the idea of a shield.

Gorbachev did not respond, proposing that the meeting end and resume at 2:30 PM.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Library*, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 16: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Fourth Plenary Meeting, Geneva,
2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

November 20, 1985

As the Geneva summit winds down, the conversation turns to how the leaders will report the results to their respective publics. Reagan confesses that he is likely to blame for having rejected any elaboration of joint language before the summit, since he did not want any “pre-cooked” statement, but rather one that reflected what the two leaders actually said and did. Gorbachev initially is skeptical, and cautions, “It would be a distortion of the truth to say that there had been progress. Such progress as had been achieved had been limited to a detailed discussion and exchange of positions.” But after Shultz lays out several options, Gorbachev indicates he is willing if the various subordinates come up with some acceptable language now.

Gorbachev opened the meeting by remarking that just days before the two leaders had been moving toward Geneva. They were now moving toward the completion of their meeting. Gorbachev understood that this would be their last official session. He invited the President to start the session.

The *President* began by noting that he would like to summarize his discussions with Gorbachev over the previous two days. He had a few points to make and would be interested in seeing if Gorbachev could agree.

There had been two days of candid conversation on a wide range of issues. There were clear differences on such questions as nuclear weapons, on the political philosophy of the two countries. It was important to be realistic and to have no illusions regarding our differences.

But there were some common concerns as well. Both sides had expressed their commitment to deep reductions in nuclear armaments and their hope to eliminate such weapons entirely some day. Both would like to intensify discussions on how to increase strategic stability and reduce the dangers to either side.

The President repeated his conviction of a need for a shift from deterrence based on strategic arms to a greater reliance on defensive systems. If our research was borne out it would be necessary to discuss how to introduce defensive systems. There was also a need for greater mutual trust through compliance with obligations under bilateral and multilateral agreements from arms control to the Helsinki Final Act.

In addition to creating a safer strategic environment, it was necessary to end tragic regional conflicts. The two sides differed on the causes of regional tensions, but the President believed both saw the need to intensify the consultative process in local conflicts. As he had said in his October UNGA speech,

the United States was prepared to associate itself with bold initiatives to resolve conflicts which had damaged U.S.-Soviet relations and aggravated international tensions. This was behind our proposals for military disengagement and to end outside involvement in regional struggles. The people of the various regions must be able to solve their own problems.

There were a number of bilateral questions which could be resolved if the necessary political will was there. The two sides should be able to agree to a fundamental expansion of exchanges in the areas of culture, science, and athletics as a means of promoting greater mutual understanding.

The President described his discussions with Gorbachev as rich and constructive. He was pleased that the two leaders would continue the process by visiting each other's countries. He looked forward to the pleasure of Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. in 1986, and to his own visit to Moscow in 1987. The results of the Geneva meetings would be clear only in the months and years ahead.

The President then read the following statement on the Nuclear and Space Talks (NST) for the Soviets' consideration as a joint statement of what might be accomplished in those discussions:

"The President and the General Secretary discussed the negotiations on nuclear and space arms. They agreed that work on these negotiations should be accelerated with a view to accomplishing the tasks assigned in the Joint US-Soviet Agreement of January 8, 1985, specifically to prevent an arms race in outer space and to terminate it on earth, to limit and reduce nuclear arms and enhance strategic stability. Offensive nuclear arms will be significantly reduced applying the general concept of 50% reductions to equal ceilings on specific, comparable categories. There will be a separate interim agreement resulting in reductions and limitations on land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missile systems as a step toward the total elimination of this class of missiles. To insure effective verification of compliance, meaningful measures to this end will be negotiated concurrently with limits on weaponry and incorporated in all agreements resulting from these negotiations."

After first confirming that the President was finished, *Gorbachev* indicated that he would like to sum up the meeting from the Soviet perspective.

Gorbachev felt that the very fact of the meeting should be considered a positive development, since it demonstrated a joint understanding of the significance of U.S.-Soviet relations and of the two sides' responsibilities and role in the world. He agreed with the President that the meeting had taken place in an atmosphere of frankness, which permitted the two leaders to outline in detail their positions on the full range of bilateral and international questions.

Gorbachev concurred further that the discussions had revealed deep differences in the two sides' assessments of the causes of certain bilateral and international differences. The talks had allowed both sides to understand one another better; this was of some importance, even major importance. Gorbachev felt, however, that the discussion had shown that the two sides were unable to build a joint concept for dealing with the broad range of bilateral and international questions.

Nonetheless, they had agreed to continue their political dialogue. It was in this context that the two leaders had agreed on an exchange of visits at a time to be arranged.

For its part the Soviet side would have to say in describing the meeting that questions of war and peace had been at the center of the meeting in one way or another both during private discussions and in plenary sessions. He felt that the people of both countries, as well as the world as a whole, were concerned by the number of nuclear weapons and the need to stop the arms race and to proceed to disarmament. Unfortunately, it was impossible to report to our peoples and to the world that there had been a rapprochement of positions.

The Soviet side had tried in the meetings to make an extra effort to explain its views. Discussions had been held, but it would be a distortion of the truth to say that there had been progress. Such progress as had been achieved was limited to a detailed discussion and exchange of positions. Gorbachev hoped that this was not the last word. Both sides would take into account the frank discussions which had taken place. Joint efforts should be continued.

The Soviet Union was in favor of continuing negotiations on the basis of the January 1985 Joint Statement on stopping the arms race on earth and preventing it in space. Serious work lay ahead. Gorbachev felt that movement was possible. The Soviet Union was committed to the spirit of the January 1985 understandings and prepared to act in accord with them, on the clear understanding that it was against the arms race on earth. The USSR was prepared as a first step to seek to implement the idea of a 50% reduction of offensive nuclear forces on the basis of both sides' proposals. But this was based on the understanding that neither side would take steps which would open up an arms race in space. On the basis of this understanding the Soviet Union was open to further movement toward deep reductions in nuclear arms.

Gorbachev agreed that it was possible to intensify bilateral relations. This would contribute to greater trust between the two countries. The USSR would be ready to work to expand exchanges in the economic, cultural and scientific fields.

On regional problems (which he at first forgot to mention), Gorbachev acknowledged that both sides attached importance to the problem and shared a desire to seek political settlements of regional disputes to relieve tensions on the basis of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. He agreed that bilateral regional expert consultations should be continued.

Noting that the President had raised the possibility of a statement summarizing the results of their discussions, Gorbachev asked if this would be justified. The *President* indicated that we had hoped to get to the subject, and called on Secretary Shultz to outline the options as we saw them. *Gorbachev* commented that the Soviets did not insist that there be a statement. If there was nothing to report, it was better to say so. The *President* felt nonetheless that it would be useful to share views on how to handle the question of reporting the results of their meetings.

Secretary Shultz outlined a number of options, noting that one could envision an outcome involving all, some, or none.

– First, there could be a written compilation of all items which had been agreed during the leaders' meetings or in the preparations for their meetings. There were quite a number of these, of varying importance. There was a possibility of developing joint language on certain arms control questions: e.g., on the Stockholm conference and chemical weapons proliferation. Agreed language existed on nuclear non-proliferation. The President in the statement he read had raised the possibility that NST might be treated, although that morning's conversation had shown the depth of differences on that set of issues. There could also be agreement on a range of regional and bilateral questions, and on a process for the future. In this connection the Secretary had been struck by Gorbachev's references the day before to a mechanism for regulating U.S.-Soviet relations. Thus, it might prove feasible to develop a package which would register areas of agreement reached in Geneva. Disagreements would not be registered except to acknowledge that they existed.

– A second possibility would be to sign some sort of document. The general exchanges agreement was already agreed at the technical level and could be signed if the leaders wished.

– A third element would be separate statements by leaders at a common site. While each leader would say what he wished, the U.S. felt there should be some coordination to avoid surprises. The Secretary speculated that statement could refer to differences but could also include parallel language where appropriate. For example, on NST there were issues on which U.S. and Soviet views coincided, and others where they did not. The kind of statement he had in mind would make clear both areas of agreement and disagreement.

– A fourth option would be to release a short joint report saying, essentially, that the leaders had met and agreed to meet again. Both sides could then issue statements of their own.

– Finally, the two sides could make individual statements at different sites. The Secretary speculated that both leaders would, in any case, be reporting publicly to their peoples in their meetings.

The Secretary concluded by noting that the U.S. would be willing to consider some sort of joint ceremony on the next morning, but was prepared to go in a variety of ways. He was aware of the great responsibility each leader had before their own people and the world to report on their discussions. A dignified ceremony at which areas of agreement could be reported and differences laid out in a modulated fashion would seem to be an appropriate way to proceed. In such a context, the President's statement on NST could be either included in a joint statement or used unilaterally.

Gorbachev, noting that the issue required some thought, indicated that he was nonetheless prepared to respond. If he understood correctly, both sides wanted to continue the dialogue that was begun in preparation for the Geneva meeting, which had been expanded in Geneva, and which would be continued in the future. Even if one were subjectively against such dialogue, objectively it was necessary to continue contacts and exchanges, and to deepen the process

of searching for solutions in the interests of the U.S. and Soviet peoples and of the people of the whole world. The Soviet Union, therefore, welcomed Secretary Shultz's expression of willingness to continue work in the future.

On how to document the Geneva meeting, Gorbachev indicated that the Soviet Union would be prepared to accommodate a U.S. desire for a joint document, whether a communique or simple statement. Noting that the Soviet Union had originally advocated a communique, but had dropped the idea when it appeared the U.S. was not interested, he outlined his assessment of how to proceed. If a communique incorporated the fundamental results of the meeting there would be no need for separate statements. If such a communique were impossible, the Geneva program should end with the present meeting.

Gorbachev felt that it would be inappropriate to seek simply to list minor agreements in a joint document. This would not be understood in our two countries or internationally. A more substantive statement would be necessary. Gorbachev wondered whether the two leaders should reassess the problem and perhaps deputize senior members of their staffs to propose a solution. He joked that he and the President might take a walk, leaving Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to work on the problem.

More seriously, Gorbachev recalled that the Soviets had always been prepared for a communique; indeed at one point they had thought the U.S. had agreed to such a document. He felt that there was still time to work out an acceptable document if both sides were willing. He repeated his suggestion that the Foreign Ministers should study the problem and present their findings to the leaders.

The *President* observed that he might have been to blame for any confusion the Soviets had felt with respect to a communique. In considering the question before the Geneva meeting, the President had been concerned about how a prearranged communique might be perceived. He had been similarly uncomfortable early in his presidency with the practice at the OECD summit meeting of having one leader read a pre-cooked document on behalf of the others. His concern for Geneva was that a document emphasize that the meeting was part of an ongoing process. In this context, a document might be worthwhile. The President felt, however, that such a document should include bilateral issues already worked out.

Gorbachev said he shared the President's view. After seven years without a U.S.-Soviet summit, the President was probably right in being somewhat apprehensive about how the meeting would develop. Now that the meeting had taken place, it might be possible to compile "a joint approach in a fundamental way." Gorbachev again suggested that the Secretary and Shevardnadze consult and report to the leaders.

The Secretary commented that U.S. and Soviet representatives had been at work since 11:30 that morning to explore possibilities of developing acceptable joint language. It would be necessary to check with them before he and Shevardnadze could begin work. *Gorbachev* agreed. He proposed a break and quipped that the most important task facing the Foreign Ministers now was to find their subordinates.

Secretary Shultz confessed jocularly that he and Shevardnadze had agreed in a September dinner conversation that they should let their leaders carry as much of the burden in Geneva as possible. Until Gorbachev had given the Foreign Ministers their current assignment, they thought they had succeeded. *Gorbachev* suggested that the Secretary was simply trying to turn his joke about a walk around on him. *The Secretary* told him not to worry, that he (the Secretary) had a thick skin.

The President and Gorbachev agreed to adjourn the meeting and, after a ten minute conversation in the Mission reception room, retired to a separate area for an extended private conversation.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Library*, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 17: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Dinner Hosted by President and Mrs. Reagan,
Geneva, 8:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

November 20, 1985

The final dinner at the Geneva summit occupies the formal dining room of the Aga Khan's house on Lake Geneva, the 18th century gray stone Maison de Saussure, where the Reagans have been staying. Featuring California wines and lobster soufflé (among other imports), the dinner brings the conversation back from SDI to the human factor, with mention of religion in the Soviet Union, letters from constituents, and more. Mainly, the two leaders agree that here at Geneva they have started something that will lead them to more significant steps in improving bilateral relations and the global situation, "with mutual understanding and a sense of responsibility." After dinner they take up the more difficult subject of the concluding public statements, about which Gorbachev is wary, but comes around. Meanwhile, the Americans are blaming Kornienko for haggling about language, but Gorbachev intervenes to settle things. (This is the final document that states nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought.) Reagan closes the discussion with a comment that his reading of previous summits transcripts convinced him "those earlier leaders had not done very much." So "to hell with the past," we'll do it our way.

The conversation began by continuing a topic touched upon at last night's dinner about the fact that people are marrying and having children younger now in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev said that, on the other hand, youth is becoming less responsible, which is illustrated by a saying which the older generation now has; we must see our grandchildren through until they reach pension age.

Gorbachev again lovingly talked about his granddaughter. President Reagan told of a letter he received from a little girl who told him exactly what she wanted him to do and at the end said" [sic] "Now go into the Oval Office and get to work."

Mrs. Gorbachev then told of a letter Gorbachev received which wished him success, expressed full agreement with his anti-alcohol campaign and said that the author kept Gorbachev's picture next to her icon. The author said she was 83 years old, prayed every day, and gave her telephone number. She then said to call only early in the morning; she was busy all other times. She lived in Kostroma. President Reagan asked whether Gorbachev called. The other replied that he would report as soon as he got back from Geneva.

Secretary Shultz asked about a revival of religion in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev replied that this question should be addressed to Mrs. Gorbachev, who taught a course on the topic; however, her course was on atheism rather than theology. Gorbachev said that many find the ritual, ceremonial part of religion attractive. However, true believers are dying out with the older generation. Still,

one third of the population marry and baptize their children in the church. The Islamic religion, however, seems to have deeper roots. Shevardnadze confirmed that traditions survive in the Islamic religion. Gorbachev said that he was speaking of the Russian orthodox [sic] Church, which is preparing to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the Christianization of Russia. The church has even petitioned the government to return to [sic] a monastery for church use. Mrs. Gorbachev said there were also many sects in Russia, including the Baptists, Pentecostals and “Tresuny.”

Secretary Shultz asked whether Khomeini had had an influence on the Islamic population of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev answered, “No.” He also said that right after the revolution there were many slogans for renouncing all of the past, as if doing away with everything which took place before the revolution. This was wrong, he said. But such were the times. He remembered that at that time even wearing a tie would brand one as a member of the bourgeoisie.

As for Khomeini, President Reagan said, he felt that both countries—the U.S. and the USSR—born of revolution, ought to keep an eye on another revolution: an attempt to bring about a fundamentalist Islamic revolution, where the revolution would become the government, and which teaches that the way to heaven is to kill a non-believer.

Gorbachev said that as we end this summit, he felt that he and President Reagan had truly made a start. It would have been unrealistic to expect great progress right away. But the whole world was very concerned, and it was a good thing that they had made this start. Donald Regan said that the President had said the same thing to him.

At this point President Reagan said that in one of the U.S.’s oldest towns, Philadelphia, a toast to the living is always given sitting down. Only a toast for the dead is given standing up. So he wanted to continue in this tradition because what the two sides were dealing with here definitely concerned the living. This is a beginning, he said. No matter what it was we failed to agree on, the important thing was that the two of them would continue to meet. Each of them had accepted an invitation to come to the other’s country and continue these meetings. Even though the two of them had not agreed on many things, they had not closed the door. They would continue to meet.

One of the early leaders of the American Revolution, Thomas Payne [sic], in those dark days when they did not know whether the revolution would succeed, said, “We have it in our power to start the world over again.” Something of that is present in what we are doing today, because the problems we are trying to solve have plagued mankind for a long time.

We have started something, President Reagan said, and he felt that these meetings expressed the will and desire of both sides to find answers that would benefit not only all the people of the world now living, but also the yet unborn. His toast, therefore, and his devout prayer was that we could deliver something better than in the past. We will continue meeting, he said, and continue to work for those clauses which had brought the sides together here in Geneva.

Gorbachev answered, saying that he was confident tonight that the two of them had started something. After a very long interval between summit meetings, he shared the President's view that it would be wrong to give a false signal from Geneva. He said that Soviet side would very carefully assess the results of this meeting, fully cognizant of a mutual sense of responsibility. Every beginning is difficult. If now we have laid the first few bricks, he said, we have made a new start, a new phase has begun. This in itself is very important. The major differences are ahead, he said, but he wanted to invite the U.S. side to move ahead on the appointed road together with the Soviet side, with mutual understanding and a sense of responsibility. We will do out [sic] part on that road, he said. We will not change our positions, our values, or our thinking, but we expect that with patience and wisdom we will find ways toward solutions. We have had the opportunity to speak privately, he said, and he attributed great importance to those talks. Without them it would have been difficult to arrive at this result. Let us then move toward each other with an understanding of our responsibility before all the countries of the world. Gorbachev's toast was for better dialogue and cooperation, for which the Soviet Union was prepared and hoped for reciprocity from the United States.

* * *

AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION

Having moved into the study after dinner, Secretary Shultz said he wanted to make a suggestion to both of the leaders about each of them making individual statements at the ceremony there would be tomorrow. He said in his personal opinion, he thought the people of the U.S. and USSR and the people of all the world really wanted to feel the presence of both of the world leaders at such a ceremony. If these leaders were simply present and went through the business of signing documents, it would not be the same thing as having them actually speak.

Gorbachev responded that in the first place he thought a joint statement or communique would represent the embodiment of the significance of such a document. Therefore, he said, he thought that a communique was of primary significance. Its presence would show that the current meetings had led to common judgments, common results and common motives in matters of principal importance. The Soviet side feels that such a document would demonstrate to the U.S. and Soviet peoples and to the world that the leaders of the two most powerful countries, despite their deep differences, are exercising their responsibility, and the document would show and convince the people of the world that the leaders were demonstrating their commitment to their principles. A joint document then would be a basis for further statements on the problems involved, both to each of the countries' allies and in the legislative bodies of both countries.

However, said Gorbachev, he thought if the leaders started to give commentaries, most especially short ones, on any document that they signed, it could very well detract from the significance of the document, because there might even be

an unfortunate phrase which would detract from the weight and significance of the document. He said he hoped to save any possible document from that fate.

President Reagan responded that he begged to disagree with the General Secretary. He said that a full statement would be an honest, frank and open document about what had and had not been achieved, and about the fact that these meetings between them would be continuing. He suggested that what Secretary Shultz had been speaking about concerned the world press and the European press. He said that if he and General Secretary Gorbachev were there at a ceremony, they would not have to comment on the specifics of any document. However, hope in the world had grown as a result of this summit meeting, and people should not be disappointed in this respect.

General Secretary Gorbachev agreed to a statement of one to three minutes' duration by each of the leaders. President Reagan concurred and added that it had been his idea not to go into detail.

Gorbachev noted that one other thing bothered him, namely, that having produced a document, the sides do not believe in themselves; commenting on it, even briefly and generally, would only serve to strengthen and reaffirm the content of that document. The President responded that instead of being silent, it would be better for the people who have placed so much hope in the outcome of these meetings to hear that he and Gorbachev are going to continue to meet despite the fact that they have not solved all of the problems connected with the communique. He said that the tone and the need here were simply not to leave this meeting and have people disappointed that there had been no progress, and thus have the hopes of so many people dashed.

Gorbachev responded that both leaders' statements ought to be in support of the document, and the statement would not last longer than two to three minutes. Moreover, the statements should not concentrate on differences, but on areas where there was agreement. He said there was no need for rose-colored glasses. Both leaders could be frank about the result reflected in the document: meanwhile, the process of their meeting would be continuing.

President Reagan said it would be necessary to decide when and where the leaders would make their statements.

When some of those present suggested it might be a good idea to have the leaders' statements at 10:30 or 11:00 AM, President Reagan explained that he preferred 10 AM, because precisely 17 hours later he would be appearing on U.S. television and giving his report about this meeting to the U.S. Congress and the American people, so the upcoming day would certainly be one of the longest working days.

Secretary Shultz said he wanted to add one thing. He had just received information about the joint understanding, and apparently the work on it was going backward. He noted that U.S. aides had been instructed to stay up all night and work to get a document out, and he expressed the hope that the Soviet leader would give his people similar instructions. Shultz said the statements would be made in the Geneva International Conference Center at 10 AM.

Korniyenko asked, "Is there anything to announce?" Shultz responded there could be—agreement had been reached about certain things; however, the Soviets were now beginning to go backward on some of what had been agreed.

Shevardnadze interjected that he had a question of principle. He said that it should be agreed not to detail differences but just make the statements in a general form.

Gorbachev said that he thought that the people involved were clever enough not to have the tail wag the fox, however, there are two foxes and two tails involved here. He said the sides ought not to come out with an empty document. Indeed, it would be better to have no document than an anemic one.

Secretary Shultz pointed out that the Soviet side was now beginning to link civil aviation and the cultural agreement. Korniyenko responded that it was Shultz who had always wanted to make those two things a package.

Shultz said that if it came to that, everything could be linked—bilateral issues and regional issues. But it would be a mistake to make everything into such a package and link everything. Korniyenko said that it would be possible to say that the sides have completed working out details on exchanges but this should not be linked to other documents.

Gorbachev said that in conclusion it can be said that the Soviet side will give its people instructions to wind up and the U.S. side can give its people instructions to wind up, and they will, even if they have to be there all night.

Shultz said yes, all night, even if they have to be there without food. He said the U.S. was glad to a civil aviation agreement with the USSR, but there had to be in it commercial terms to make the route financially attractive to PanAm, otherwise the company would simply not fly the route and there was no reason for Aeroflot to have a monopoly on that market.

Korniyenko said that yesterday the Soviet side had compromised on that issue and then the U.S. had advanced 30 points which had knocked everything out of kilter.

To Gorbachev's suggestion that everyone continue working, Shultz said that it was good and the U.S. side would work all night and that would be great if agreement could be achieved and if that were not possible, then there just would not be agreement.

Gorbachev said he thought he did not completely understand all the differences with all of the documents, but in any event he spoke to his people to the effect that he wanted everyone to get his act together and somehow iron out these last minute difficulties in regard to these issues.

President Reagan said that he and Gorbachev were meeting for the first time at this level. They had little practice, since they had never done it before. Nevertheless, having read the history of previous summit meetings he had concluded that those earlier leaders had not done very much. Therefore, he suggested that he and Gorbachev say, "To hell with the past," we'll do it our way and get something done.

Gorbachev concurred. The conversation broke up at 10:30 P.M.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F96-087 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 18: Draft Private Letter from Reagan to Gorbachev

November 28, 1985

Reagan wrote out by hand this first post-Geneva letter to Gorbachev, based on a typed text drafted by his staff, which he edited and initialed. Here, Reagan is trying to build on the spirit of Geneva and to address directly two primary differences he heard at the summit—concerning SDI and regional conflicts, more specifically Afghanistan. “I was struck by your conviction that ... [SDI] is somehow designed to secure a strategic advantage—even to permit a first strike capability,” he wrote. Indeed, this was Gorbachev’s nightmare, a high-tech equivalent of Hitler’s blitzkrieg—except this time it would not be Panzers coming through Poland, but laser beams from orbit. Reagan assures Gorbachev to the contrary, but such assurances—however sincere they certainly were in Reagan’s mind—never alleviated Gorbachev’s concerns from the period prior to Geneva through the Reykjavik summit. After all, the Pentagon had its true believers in so-called “space dominance,” which may explain why Reagan’s bureaucracy would never serve him well enough to distinguish between “offensive” SDI systems (which he could negotiate away) and “defensive” ones that would fit Reagan’s own vision. Addressing the second issue, Reagan suggests that a significant step in improving U.S.-USSR relations would be a Soviet decision to “withdraw your forces from Afghanistan.” Actually, the American side (except for journalist Don Oberdorfer, who wrote about the discussion on Afghanistan)⁶³ had largely missed the significance of Gorbachev’s position at Geneva on this issue—not belligerent but matter-of-fact, letting his counterparts know the Soviets were indeed headed for withdrawal. Reagan’s letter suggests that the two leaders set themselves a private goal—to find a practical way to solve the two critical issues discussed here.

Dear Mr. General Secretary: [Gorbachev:]⁶⁴

Now that we are both home and facing the task of leading our countries into a more constructive relationship with each other, I wanted to waste no time in giving you some of my initial thoughts on our meetings. Though I will be sending shortly, in a more formal and official manner, a more detailed commentary on our discussions, there are some things I would like to convey very personally and privately.

First, I want you to know that I found our meetings of great value. We had agreed to speak frankly, and we did. As a result, I came away from the meeting with a better understanding of your attitudes. I hope you also understand mine a

⁶³ Don Oberdorfer, “Afghanistan, Arms Major Summit Themes,” *Washington Post*, November 22, 1985.

⁶⁴ In this document, the italicized corrections in brackets, as well as crossed out words and phrases, represent Reagan’s handwritten corrections on the original document. [Editors]

little better. Obviously there are many things on which we disagree, and disagree very fundamentally. But if I understood you correctly, you too are determined to take steps to see that our nations manage their relations in a peaceful fashion. If this is the case, then this is one point on which we are in total agreement—and it is after all the most fundamental one of all.

As for our substantive differences, let me offer some thoughts on two of the key ones.

Regarding strategic defense and its relations to the reduction of offensive nuclear weapons, I was struck by your conviction that the American program is somehow designed to secure a strategic advantage—even to permit a first strike capability. I also noted your concern that research [*and testing*] in this area could be a cover for developing and placing offensive weapons in space.

As I told you, neither of these concerns ~~has any foundation in reality~~ [*is warranted*]. But I can understand, as you explained so eloquently, that these are matters which cannot be taken on faith. ~~Of course this is true, and I do not expect you to take my assurances on faith.~~ Both of us must deal [*cope*] with the reality of what the other side is doing, and judge the implications for the security of our [*his*] own countries[ry]. [*I do not ask you to take my assurances on faith.*]

However, the objective reality [*truth*] is that the United States has no intention ~~to use~~ [*of using*] its strategic defense program to gain any advantage, and there is no development underway to create space-based offensive weapons. Our objective [*goal*] is to eliminate any possibility of a first strike from either side. This being the case, we should be able to find the [*a*] way, in practical terms, to ~~eliminate~~ [*relieve*] the concerns you have expressed.

For example, could our negotiators, when they resume work in January, discuss frankly and specifically what sort of future developments each of us would find threatening? Neither of us, it seems, wants to see offensive weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, deployed in space. Should we not attempt to define what sort of systems have that potential and then try to find verifiable ways to prevent their development?

And can't our negotiators deal more frankly and openly with the question of how to eliminate a first-strike potential on both sides? Your military now has an advantage in this area—a three to one advantage in warheads that can destroy hardened targets with little warning. That is obviously worrisome [*alarming*] to us, and explains many of the efforts we are making in our modernization program. You may perhaps feel that the U.S. has some advantages in other categories. If so, let's insist that our negotiators face up to these issues and find a way to improve the security of both countries by agreeing on appropriately balanced reductions. If you are as sincere as I am in not seeking to secure or preserve one-sided advantages, we will ~~not allow~~ [*find*] a solution to these problems ~~to elude us~~.

Regarding another key issue we discussed, that of regional conflicts, I can assure you that the United States does not believe that the Soviet Union is the cause of all the world's ills. We do believe, however, that your country has exploited and exacerbated [*worsened*] local tensions and conflict by militarizing them and,

indeed, intervening directly and indirectly in struggles arising out of local causes. While we both will doubtless continue to support our friends, we must find a way to do so without use of armed force. This is the crux of the point I tried to make.

One of the most significant steps in lowering tension in the world—and tension in U.S.-Soviet relations—would be a decision on your part to withdraw your forces from Afghanistan. I gave careful attention to your comments on this issue at Geneva, and am encouraged by your statement that you feel political reconciliation is possible. I want you to know that I am prepared to cooperate in any reasonable way to facilitate such a withdrawal, and that I understand that it must be done in a manner which does not damage Soviet security interests. During our meetings I mentioned one idea which I thought might be helpful and I will welcome any further suggestions you may have.

These are only two of the key issues on our current agenda. I will soon send some thoughts on others. I believe that we should act promptly to build the momentum our meetings initiated.

In Geneva, I found our private sessions particularly useful. Both of us ~~need~~ [have] advisors and assistants, but, you know, in the final analysis, the responsibility to preserve peace and increase cooperation is ours. Our people look to us for leadership, and nobody can provide it if we don't. But we won't be very effective leaders unless we can rise above the specific but secondary concerns that ~~infest~~ [preoccupy] our respective bureaucracies and give our governments a strong push in the right direction.

So, what I want to say finally is that we should make the most of the time before we meet again to find some specific and significant steps that would give meaning to our commitment to peace and arms reduction. Why not set a goal—privately, just between the two of us—to find a practical way to solve [critical issues] ~~the two critical issues~~ I have mentioned—by the time we meet in Washington?

Please ~~give~~ [convey] regards from Nancy and me to Mrs. Gorbacheva. We genuinely enjoyed meeting you in Geneva and are already looking forward to showing you something of our country next year.

Sincerely yours,
[RR]

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA S97-001 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 19: Letter from Gorbachev to Reagan

December 24, 1985

Gorbachev opens this letter by noting that he values “the form you used in writing to me”—meaning that Reagan’s decision to write out the November 28 letter in longhand had its effect. Gorbachev’s lengthy and detailed response lays out the Soviet fear of what he keeps calling “space strike” weapons, and the assumption that the U.S. goal in pursuing SDI is really to create a technological breakthrough that would enable U.S. superiority in space and in particular the use of directed-energy beams to destroy Soviet installations on the ground. Gorbachev calls the development of such weapons “an extremely dangerous build-up of offensive potential...” that would set off a new arms race—exactly what Gorbachev is trying to prevent: “the only sensible way out is not to engage in this at all.” Gorbachev acknowledges Reagan’s repeated assurances on the defensive purposes of SDI: “I do not doubt that you personally may really have no such intentions” of using SDI to achieve military predominance, in implied contrast to those SDI advocates in the U.S. who explicitly sought superiority in space. Gorbachev also addresses briefly regional conflicts, arguing that the Soviets are assisting legitimate governments, that American interventions are inciting conflict, and that the U.S. “intentionally fails to notice the ‘open door’” for settlement in Afghanistan. Notable is Gorbachev’s tone, less formal than his previous letter, written on December 5, and even suggesting that Reagan consider it another of their “fireside talks”—referring to the famous chat in front of a roaring fire at the lakeside villa in Geneva.

Dear Mr. President:

I consider your letter important and also value the form you used in writing to me.

I say this to you because I see the desire to continue and to strengthen what we achieved in Geneva. I am glad that we began there—both in substance and in spirit—a direct and frank discussion. I attach special significance to the fact that we have been able to overcome the serious psychological barrier which for a long time has hindered a dialogue worthy of the leaders of the USSR and USA. [...]

The first thing we should do is to take upon ourselves the task of undoing the knot which has been tied around the issues of nuclear and space weapons. I was encouraged by the fact that you, Mr. President, also consider that this is of key significance.

I think you understood from what I told you in Geneva that our decisive opposition to the development of space-strike weapons is dictated by the fact that weapons of this class which, due to their specific nature, possess the capability of being used both for defensive and offensive aims, represent in the final analysis an extremely dangerous build-up of offensive potential, with all the

consequences inevitably ensuing therefrom from the point of view of further escalating the arms race.

You say, Mr. President, that the U.S. has no intention of using the SDI program to obtain military superiority.

I do not doubt that you personally may really have no such intentions. But you must agree that the leadership of one side has to evaluate the actions of the other in the area of developing new types of weapons, not in accordance with intentions, but in accordance with the potential capabilities [sic] which may be attained as a result of the development of these weapons.

Examining the SDI program from this perspective, the Soviet leadership comes to the same conclusion every time: given the realities of the current situation, only a country which is preparing for a first (dismantling) strike needs a "space shield"; a country which does not base its actions on such a concept should have no need for such a weapons system.

After all, space-strike weapons are all-purpose weapons. The space-strike weapons that are being created in the U.S. are kinetic energy weapons and also long-range, directed energy systems (with a range of several thousand miles and great destructive power). As our experts and scientists and yours confirm, those weapons are capable of destroying in space, as well as from space, within a very short time, in great quantities and selectively, objects which are thousands of miles away. I stress—thousands of miles away. [...]

How then, Mr. President, should the Soviet Union act in such a situation? I would like to repeat what I already told you in Geneva. The USSR cannot simply reduce and will not reduce nuclear weapons to the detriment of its security, when the SDI program is being implemented in the U.S. Whether we like it or not, we will be forced to develop and improve our strategic nuclear forces and increase their capability of neutralizing the U.S. "space shield." At the same time, we would also have to develop our own space weapons *inter alia* for the purpose of a territorial ABM defense. Probably, the U.S. would in turn then take some other additional steps. As a result, we will not get out of the vicious cycle of measures and countermeasures, out of the whirlpool of an ever-increasing arms race. The consequence of such competition for our peoples and for all of mankind is unpredictable.

I am convinced that the only sensible way out is not to engage in this at all. From every point of view the correct path for our countries is negotiation on the prevention of an arms race in space and its cessation on earth. And we need to come to agreement on the basis of equal and mutually acceptable conditions.

You and I agreed to accelerate the negotiations. I took satisfaction in hearing you say that the U.S. would not "develop space-based offensive weapons."

As I see it, some kind of common basis is emerging between you and me for a very significant part of the problem of preventing an arms race in space. Let us have our representatives at the negotiations proceed on this basis to begin working out specific measures to prevent the development of offensive space weapons, i.e., all space-based weapons which can destroy targets in space and from space. [...]

I cannot agree with the way you formulate the issue of first strike nuclear forces. This issue, of course, is not merely one of ICBM warheads. For example, there is no difference between U.S. ballistic missile warheads on "Trident" submarines and warheads on modern Soviet land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles as far as their kill capability is concerned, i.e. in terms of such indices as accuracy, power and range. And if one considers this issue from the point of view of warning time, then, for a significant portion of submarine missiles, where the U.S. has a three-fold advantage in warheads, the warning time is significantly shorter.

And can we view the "Pershing II" missiles deployed in Europe with their high accuracy and short flight time to targets on USSR territory as anything other than first-strike weapons? Please forgive me for dealing with technical details in a personal letter like this. But these are vitally important realities, and we simply cannot get around them. [...]

Mr. President, I would like to give you my brief reaction to what you said concerning regional conflicts. At the time when we touched on these issues in Geneva, I stressed that it is most important to view things realistically, to see the world as it is. If we recognize the fact that independent states exist and function in the international arena, then we also have to acknowledge their sovereign right to have relations with whomever they wish and the right to ask for assistance, including military assistance.

Both you and we offer such assistance. Why apply a double standard and assert that Soviet assistance is a source of tension and U.S. assistance is beneficial? It would be better for us to be guided by objective criteria in this matter. The Soviet Union is assisting legitimate governments which come to us because they have been and are being subjected to outside military interference.

And, as the facts indicate, the U.S. incites actions against governments and supports and supplies weapons to groups which are inimical to society and which are, in essence, terrorists. Looking at things objectively, it is such actions and outside interference that create regional tension and conflict. If such actions cease, I am convinced tensions will decrease and the prospects for political settlements will become much better and more realistic.

Unfortunately, at present, developments are proceeding in a different direction. Take, for example, the unprecedented pressure and threats which the government of Nicaragua is being subjected to—a legitimate government brought to power through free elections.

I will be frank: what the United States has done recently causes concern. It seems that there is a tilt in the direction of further exacerbation of regional problems. Such an approach does not make it easier to find a common language and makes the search for political solutions more difficult.

With regard to Afghanistan, one gets the impression that the U.S. side intentionally fails to notice the "open door" leading to a political settlement. Now there is even a working formula for such a settlement. It is important not to hinder the negotiations in progress, but to help them along. In that event a fair settlement will definitely be found.

Mr. President, I would like to have you take my letter as another one of our “fireside talks.” I would truly like to preserve not only the spirit of our Geneva meetings, but also to go further in developing our dialogue. I view our correspondence as a very important channel for preparing for our meeting in Washington.

The new year will be upon us very soon, and I would like to send you and your wife our very best wishes.

Sincerely,
M. Gorbachev

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library (State Department translation), obtained through FOIA S97-001 by the National Security Archive.]

Chapter 2

THE REYKJAVIK SUMMIT, 1986

The Reagan-Gorbachev meeting at Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986 may well rank as “the most bizarre summit in the history of the Cold War.”¹ The superpowers did not even intend the event to be a “summit.” The two leaders had almost immediately agreed at Geneva in November 1985 to host each other for two reciprocal summits in the next two years, one in Washington and one in Moscow. But in late 1985 and throughout 1986, U.S.-Soviet relations suffered from waterfalls of controversies, injury by a thousand cuts, Cold War gambits, trades of accused spies, rhetorical blunderbusses by those on both sides who rejected new thinking, and no small amount of miffed feelings and corresponding tough words on the part of both leaders, although the nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl power plant near Kiev in April 1986 refocused Gorbachev’s abolitionist convictions.² Finally, Gorbachev would propose in September a working meeting, “maybe just for one day,” so the two leaders could personally intervene to create some momentum and prepare for the real thing—a formal summit in Washington.

But instead of an interim meeting, the two heads of state acted out the all-time “what if?” superpower summit. To read the transcripts of what happened at Reykjavik is to marvel at how high the stakes were, and how close Reagan and Gorbachev came to a landmark agreement on nuclear abolition. As Raymond Garthoff summed up the views of contemporaries, many saw Reykjavik’s “startling and far-reaching exploration of possibilities for the drastic reduction or even elimination of nuclear weapons” as “a spectacular missed opportunity,” while others viewed the meeting as “a perilous near disaster,” and posterity would judge it “for better or worse” a “historic near miss.”³ Ironically, as George Shultz commented in his memoir, “in the eyes of the world, Reykjavik would become the epitome of the very word ‘summit.’”⁴

In his memoir, Gorbachev described the “Shakespearean passions” of Reykjavik, and compared it to the Chernobyl nuclear accident as “equal in its effect on shaking the foundations on which the post-war world was built.”⁵ Reagan afterwards presented two very different views of Reykjavik, depending on the

¹ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 315.

² For the details of the ups and downs of the relationship between Geneva and Reykjavik, see Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 265–285.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 285–286.

⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 752.

⁵ Gorbachev, *Zhizn’ i reformy*, p. 30. A section of Gorbachev’s Russian-language memoir is titled “The Drama of Reykjavik,” pp. 27–31.

audience, either emphasizing that he had refused to “back down” on the Strategic Defense Initiative (as he told himself, in his diary, and conservative crowds on the campaign trail),⁶ or avoiding blame for the failure by claiming: “the significance of that meeting at Reykjavik is not that we didn’t sign agreements in the end; the significance is that we got as close as we did. The progress that we made would’ve been inconceivable just a few months ago.”⁷

Indeed, a few months and even weeks earlier in 1986, the superpowers were at an impasse. Dominating the headlines was a tit-for-tat spy scandal, starting with FBI entrapment in August of a Soviet U.N. official in New York, followed by KGB entrapment (with the help of egregiously clumsy tradecraft by the CIA station) of the journalist Nicholas Daniloff (not a spy) in Moscow, and a linked release at the end of September, worked out only after mutual expulsions of diplomats and Soviet U.N. personnel known to be spies, and after much misunderstanding and many accusations of bad faith on both sides. Such tensions had the effect of shrouding some of the more important long-term breakthroughs underway at the same time, such as the Soviet agreement at the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe negotiations, in August 1986, for the on-site observation of large military exercises, with advance notification, which signaled a radical change in Moscow’s position on verification.⁸ In fact, the Soviet stance on the latter issue completely reversed the dynamic, revealing that the U.S. military only favored such verification as long as they assumed the Soviets would never agree, and certainly did not intend for on-site verification to be applied to themselves. Despite progress at Stockholm, the strategic arms talks at Geneva remained stymied.

The breakthrough with most relevance to the Reykjavik drama had occurred at the very beginning of 1986, when Gorbachev launched his own proposals to abolish nuclear weapons. The evolution of these proposals provides fascinating evidence for the interactive effect of Ronald Reagan on Soviet policy. As early as spring 1985 (according to the account by senior Soviet General Viktor Starodubov), his boss and the military officer who was perhaps most respected within Soviet ranks, Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev, had already begun developing ideas for a nuclear abolition package. Part of the motivation, according to Starodubov, was for the military to meet the new mood brought by the new Soviet leadership of Gorbachev. But Starodubov also remarked that in their first meeting on the subject that spring, Akhromeyev explicitly cited Reagan’s own “zero” proposal as the potential basis for the new Soviet package—referring back to the 1981 American idea of eliminating intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe.⁹ Of course, the Americans had proposed the “zero option” knowing full well that the Soviets at the time would not accept it, since the trade would have withdrawn

⁶ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 350.

⁷ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 290.

⁸ Jack Matlock called this “an arms control breakthrough.” Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 209.

⁹ Starodubov, *Ot razoruzheniia k kapituliatsii*, pp. 261.

already-deployed Soviet SS-20s for the not-yet-deployed American Pershings. Yet both Reagan and then Secretary of State Haig (the latter in congressional testimony) had spoken of, for example, “equal ceilings at the lowest possible levels—levels which ideally could be zero.”¹⁰

Soviet leaders including Brezhnev and Chernenko had previously used nuclear abolition language, especially in the propaganda campaigns of the early 1980s against Pershing deployments in Europe. But Akhromeyev did not cite those positions as precedents to his top staff, although he remarked to Starodubov that complete nuclear disarmament would be in the Soviet national security interest because of the Soviet superiority in conventional arms in Europe, and he mentioned the political benefit in terms of the propaganda message. Right after Geneva’s discussions of 50 percent reductions, the common language about ending the arms race, and the agreement on the statement that nuclear war could not be won and should never be fought, Akhromeyev worked with his staff and the Foreign Ministry’s Georgy Kornienko to finalize the package of proposals, sent his deputy, Col. Gen. Nikolay Chervov, to brief the package to Gorbachev, on vacation in Crimea, and set in motion the January 1986 announcement by the Soviet general secretary of his plan to eliminate nuclear arms by the year 2000 in a sequence of three stages.¹¹

Dismissed by many in the West as just more Soviet propaganda (even Dobrynin later commented “it would not be honest to deny that Gorbachev’s proclamation carried elements of propaganda”),¹² this abolition plan seems now to have been Gorbachev’s own turning point on Soviet security. His future national security adviser, Anatoly Chernyaev, wrote about it in his diary for January 16, 1986: “Gorbachev’s proposal for a nuclear-free world by the year 2000. My impression is that he’s really decided to end the arms race no matter what. He is taking this ‘risk’ because, as he understands, it’s no risk at all—because nobody would attack us if we disarmed completely. And in order to get the country out on solid ground, we have to relieve it of the burden of the arms race, which is a drain on more than just the economy.”¹³

“Nobody would attack us if we disarmed completely.” This was a remarkable breakthrough, in effect the end of the Soviet insecurity, from Stalin’s time through Chernenko’s, that had motivated their side of the Cold War.¹⁴ This was the way out of the security dilemma that had trapped both sides, in which a move

¹⁰ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 40–41.

¹¹ Starodubov, *Ot razoruzheniia k kapitulatsii*, p. 262; see also the Akhromeyev-Kornienko joint memoir, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*.

¹² Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 597.

¹³ Anatoly Chernyaev, Diary, January 16, 1986. For the English translation of all of 1986, by Anna Melyakova and edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, see “The Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev,” posted May 25, 2007, at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB220/index.htm.

¹⁴ See for example Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity*.

seen as defensive by its originator only communicated increased threat to the other party. Gorbachev's aides, such as Yakovlev and Chernyaev, had picked up ideas like this from their international experiences, in Toronto and Prague and elsewhere; and others of the "new thinkers" had done the same during various international scientific and educational exchanges. This innovative concept fit with the new generational outlook that Gorbachev represented: his cohorts were mere kids in Stalin's and Hitler's time; their professional experiences were formed during the bureaucratic consolidation under Brezhnev and the thaw of détente.¹⁵ So if the United States was not going to attack, then the security buffer zone of Eastern Europe looked less and less necessary, and more like a series of debit accounts on the subsidy ledger. The same held for the dominance of the military-industrial complex in the Soviet economy—not to mention the whole apparatus of repression that "could only exist by watching its opponents through the cross hairs of a gunsight, only by digging deeper and stronger defenses, only by feverishly competing for military superiority."¹⁶ Subsequently, Chernyaev wrote that he could "pinpoint the exact time when Gorbachev placed his stake on a direct dialogue with the American leadership. It was at the very beginning of 1986. Hence the famous declaration about a nuclear-free world by the year 2000."¹⁷

Gorbachev's nuclear abolition proposals found an interested audience in Ronald Reagan, even though almost every other senior U.S. official saw the proposal as propaganda. Jack Matlock believed that if Gorbachev had been truly serious, he would have transmitted the plan confidentially and begun a dialogue about it, rather than announcing it publicly almost simultaneously with his letter to Reagan. Yet, according to Matlock's account, Reagan's new national security adviser, John Poindexter, told him that Reagan specifically noticed Gorbachev's date certain for abolition, the year 2000, and that this was the first time—despite decades of Soviet rhetoric against the arms race—that a Soviet leader had put forward a concrete date for disarmament.¹⁸ Reagan himself wrote in his diary on February 4, 1986, about a high-level meeting "in the situation room about Gorbachev's proposal to eliminate nuclear arms. Some wanted to tag it a publicity stunt. I said no. Let's say we share their overall goals and now want to work out the details ... [and] if research reveals a defense against missiles is possible, we'll work out how it can be used to protect the whole world not just us."¹⁹ Shultz understood

¹⁵ For insightful analysis of the generational shift, see Zubok, *A Failed Empire*.

¹⁶ This is the judgment of the former general, *glasnost*-driven historian, and Yeltsin aide, Dmitri Volkogonov, in *Lenin*, p. 484.

¹⁷ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 59.

¹⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 178. For Gorbachev's letter to Reagan, January 14, 1986, see Document No. 20.

¹⁹ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 651. The minutes of this meeting, National Security Planning Group Meeting, February 3, 1986, "Arms Control—Responding to Gorbachev," were reconstructed several months later by NSC staffers Robert Linhard and Don Mahley, and are located in the Linhard Papers at the Ronald Reagan Library, NSC Files, under a July

what his president was thinking. He told the State Department's arms control group on January 17, 1986, to get working "on what a world without nuclear weapons would mean to us," and how to get there. "I know that many of you and others around here oppose the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons," Shultz said, "but the President of the United States doesn't agree with you, and he has said so on several very public occasions." At the same time, Shultz acknowledged there was no question "it's a political hot button."²⁰

This internal controversy held up Reagan's letter responding to Gorbachev on abolition until February 22, 1986²¹—much to the Soviet leader's consternation. Gorbachev told the 27th Party Congress on February 25 that the Reagan letter "seems to contain some reassuring opinions and theses" but these "are swamped in various reservations, 'linkages' and 'conditions.'"²² Yet Gorbachev's five-hour speech directly endorsed the necessity of "cooperation on a global scale"—according to Raymond Garthoff, here Gorbachev "first notably expounded" the "new thinking" in foreign policy. Tellingly, Gorbachev quoted Reagan's dinner toast at Geneva about how the arrival of extraterrestrials would compel the U.S. and USSR quickly to find common ground and a common defense, and made exactly Reagan's point: "Isn't a nuclear catastrophe a more real danger than a landing of unknown extraterrestrials? Is not the ecological threat a big enough threat? Don't all countries have a common interest in finding a sensible and fair approach to the problems of developing states and peoples?" Indeed, Gorbachev concluded, "the course of history, of social progress, requires ever more insistently establishing a constructive creative interaction among states and peoples on the scale of the entire world Such interaction is essential in order to prevent a nuclear catastrophe, so that civilization should survive." Echoing some of the Geneva dialogue with Reagan along with Chernyaev's insight, the Soviet leader told the Party Congress, "[s]ecurity cannot indefinitely be based on fear of retaliation, that is on doctrines of 'deterrence' or 'intimidation ... but can be resolved only by political means.'"²³

Gorbachev's frustration with the U.S. response would continue through 1986, perhaps most vividly expressed in his meeting with a U.S. congressional

21, 1986, cover memo. The NSPG considered three options, first, calling the proposal a "publicity stunt," second, reformulating the Soviet plan in U.S. terms while only moving on the INF portion, or third, moving on all negotiating areas; the second option became Reagan's letter of February 22, 1986. Reagan's own words in the NSPG were both harsher ("we need to make the Soviets expose the fact that they are not really serious about reductions") and more idealistic ("perhaps the concept of a 'common trigger' where some international group, perhaps the UN, could deploy SDI against anyone who threatened use of nuclear weapons") than in his diary.

²⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 699–705.

²¹ Document No. 21.

²² See Serge Schmemmann's coverage, "Gorbachev Says U.S. Arms Note Is Not Adequate," *New York Times*, February 26, 1986.

²³ Quoted in Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, pp. 257–263.

delegation in April.²⁴ By September, the Soviet leader really needed a summit, not least to show progress on arms reductions that would help him address his economic problems and proceed with his political reforms. Breaking through the clutter and spy headlines, Gorbachev sent a letter to Reagan through Shevardnadze, whose scheduled Washington meetings went ahead on September 19, 1986, with the key proposal at the very end of the four pages: “They [the negotiations] will lead nowhere unless you and I intervene personally.” “That is why an idea has come to my mind to suggest to you, Mr. President, that in the very near future and setting aside all other matters, we have a quick one-on-one meeting—let us say in Iceland or in London—maybe just for one day” to “demonstrate political will” and produce “instructions to our respective agencies to craft agreements on two or three very specific questions, which you and I could sign during my visit to the United States.”²⁵ Why Iceland? As Gorbachev told Chernyaev when he asked, it’s “halfway between us and them, and none of the great powers will be offended.”²⁶

A man in a hurry, Gorbachev intended to come to Iceland with far-reaching proposals and concessions. In the middle of preparations during the first week of October 1986, a Soviet submarine caught fire and ultimately sank off the U.S. coast and the Politburo debated whether to ask the Americans for help—Gorbachev said of course but others muttered that the captain should go down with his ship. At the October 8 Politburo meeting, just before leaving for Reykjavik, Gorbachev reminded his colleagues, “[b]ecause of the submarine, which just sank, everybody knows, everybody saw what shape we are in.”²⁷ Gorbachev told his top aides, in preparing for Reykjavik, “our goal is to prevent the next round of arms race. ... And if we do not compromise on some questions, even very important ones, we will lose the main point: we will be pulled into an arms race beyond our power, and we will lose this race, for we are presently at the limit of our capabilities.” Gorbachev insisted: “I repeat, the leitmotif here is the liquidation of nuclear weapons, and the political approach prevails here, not the arithmetical one.”²⁸ Moscow’s positions included the long-standing proposal for a nuclear test ban—not least because this would prevent the American SDI program from developing space weapons fueled by nuclear explosions—and the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear weapons to zero (although still tied to an overall package of limits on strategic and space weapons). As Gorbachev remarked to his advisers, “keep in mind the task of knocking the Pershing II’s out of Europe. It is a gun pressed to our temple.”²⁹

The contrast between the Soviet preparatory documents and the corresponding U.S. materials is striking—the latter are bereft of any clue about what is coming,

²⁴ Document No. 22.

²⁵ Document No. 23.

²⁶ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 78.

²⁷ Document No. 27.

²⁸ Document No. 26.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

and Gorbachev's proposals would create consternation on the American side. Shultz briefed Reagan with an October 2 memo claiming that now the Soviets were talking from "our script," when in fact, they were writing a whole new play. Both Shultz and National Security Adviser John Poindexter downplayed the importance of the meeting, advising Reagan to proceed "without permitting the impression that Reykjavik itself was a Summit or raising false expectations for Summit II in the U.S."³⁰ In contrast to the graduate course on the Soviet Union over months with briefing papers and videos worked up for Reagan prior to Geneva, this time there were only a few weeks of preparation by Reagan, and only incremental initiatives. On the nuclear test moratorium, Shultz told Reagan the U.S. would "convince Gorbachev of the wisdom of our step-by-step approach." Senior American officials doubted Gorbachev would present much that was new, and told Reagan "you will have to smoke him out during your discussions"—as if Gorbachev would not launch his proposals right away.³¹ As the State Department's "Lessons of Reykjavik" paper noted for Shultz afterwards, "Reykjavik demonstrated once again how poor we are at guessing what the Soviets will do. The widespread prediction was that the Soviets would concentrate on INF and shun START, would hit hard on interim restraint, and press testing. Gorbachev was said to need a summit, and have trouble controlling his military. None of this was much in evidence."³²

The setting of the Reykjavik summit also made the meeting remarkable. The delegations flew into Iceland landing on an airstrip originally built by the U.S. military to ferry planes and supplies to Europe during World War II, when Washington and Moscow were allies. The actual meeting rooms had their own story, in that volcanic Iceland, lacking much in the way of trees, had to import its wooden housing; in the case of the picturesque Hofdi House, a leading merchant had brought the building as a prefabricated kit from Denmark in the 1800s, and placed it on the scenic peninsula with views over the bay, mountains and glaciers, where it subsequently became the municipal hospitality house. The two delegations had only a couple of rooms apiece for their preparatory meetings, and occasionally had to repair to the bathrooms for their discussions.³³

In keeping with the U.S. view of the meeting as "not a summit," the American group was much smaller than the Soviet team, with two significant holes in the lineup. First, the U.S. side featured no senior military officer, while the Soviets sent their chief of the General Staff, Marshal Akhromeyev, to serve as the lead negotiator. In contrast, Paul Nitze could do little more than convene the delegation as senior adviser to the secretary of state, having none of Akhromeyev's

³⁰ Document No. 25.

³¹ Stephen Sestanovich, NSC, "Gorbachev's Goals and Tactics at Reykjavik," October 2, 1986, Document No. 6 in "The Reykjavik File," <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB203/index.htm>.

³² Document No. 34.

³³ Personal observations of the authors at Hofdi House, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary ceremonies with Gorbachev in October 2006.

authority to make a deal. Worst of all, expecting only a short working meeting, Jack Matlock recommended against having the First Lady accompany her husband. He later wrote that his worst mistake was not making sure Nancy came along, because then Reagan might have stayed the extra day or two to make a deal, rather than being impatient to get back to Washington.³⁴ In contrast, Raisa was the first person on Gorbachev's list for the Soviet delegation.³⁵

Knowledgeable observers then and later assumed that Gorbachev was limited in what he could offer by instructions from the Politburo. Indeed, Chernyaev's notes of Politburo discussions do show a consensus about the decapitating danger of space-based weapons and an insistence on maintaining the ABM Treaty for an indefinite duration. But notes of the Politburo session just before Reykjavik indicate Gorbachev did have some leeway. His future conservative critic, Yegor Ligachev, insisted: "It is right to link strategic weapons with negotiations over testing and ABM," but went on to say, "[a]ll the same, I think that if nothing comes of Reykjavik, we should not abandon the dialogue or [Gorbachev's] future visit to the U.S." because "[n]either we nor America can carry the burden of an arms race any longer."³⁶

At Reykjavik, first Gorbachev and then Akhromeyev presented an entire series of major concessions: they embraced 50 percent cuts including in the huge Soviet advantage in heavy missiles; dropped British and French forces from proposed INF limits; excluded the short-range, forward-based U.S. systems from the definition of "strategic"; moved toward Reagan's July 25 proposal of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for 7.5 years (the original Soviet position was 15 years, now 10); and dropped the demand for a ban on SDI research, as long as testing was limited to labs. (By the end of October, the Politburo would even agree to air and land tests, just not those in space.³⁷)

Then, during their last session, the two leaders agreed to cut all U.S. and Soviet strategic offensive weapons (not just ballistic missiles) by 50 percent within five years, and eliminate all nuclear explosive devices, including bombs, battlefield systems, cruise missiles, submarine-based weapons and intermediate-range systems by 1996. Reagan even suggested "getting together in Iceland in 1996 to destroy the last Soviet and American missiles under triumphant circumstances."³⁸ That deal would have made the world a much safer place today, with less fissile material around for terrorists to grab, with much tighter controls on missile technology, and with a stronger international commitment to nuclear non-proliferation against actors like Iran and North Korea.

³⁴ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 213–214.

³⁵ Document No. 26.

³⁶ Document No. 27.

³⁷ Gorbachev's presentation of the Soviet proposals takes up most of the first meeting with Reagan, Document No. 28. See also the Akhromeyev-Nitze meeting, Document No. 30.

³⁸ Document No. 32. The Soviet transcript of the second part of this meeting is somewhat more detailed than the American memcon: see Document No. 33.

The documents show that the actual positions and aspirations of both leaders were very close, and in fact their ultimate dreams—the total elimination of nuclear weapons—were identical. But at the time, Reagan’s dream about SDI seemed to be Gorbachev’s nightmare. For Reagan, as he said over and over, SDI would serve as the gas mask that you keep around even when you’ve banned chemical warfare—just in case—as insurance against an accident or a madman, or “some alien life form that was going to attack the Earth approaching on Halley’s Comet.”³⁹ For Gorbachev, SDI was a potential blitzkrieg like Hitler’s, which took 30 million Soviet lives, in the form of a first strike from space. Whereas Reagan’s dream was straight out of the movies, Gorbachev’s nightmare was the central security preoccupation for the Soviets. The original concept for SDI came from Reagan’s 1940 movie *Murder in the Air* (Warner Brothers), in which young Ron played the heroic Lieutenant Brass Bancroft of the Secret Service and shot the bad guys out of the sky with a photon machine called an “inertial projector.”⁴⁰

Looking back, the question arises: what were the Soviets so worried about? SDI still does not work, more than three decades and tens of billions of dollars later.⁴¹ Soviet scientists had even told Gorbachev that it probably would not succeed, and would be cheap to counter with decoys and multiple launchers. And Gorbachev seemed convinced. As early as March 1986 he admonished the Politburo that it was “time to stop being scared of SDI” and move on toward assertive proposals on disarmament.⁴² At the October 4 preparatory session, he identified reducing strategic weapons by 50 percent, “not nuclear testing, as the top priority of our push-and-breakthrough position” and insisted “[w]e should not link this position with space [issues].”⁴³

Yet, in October at Reykjavik, Gorbachev became utterly stuck on SDI as if his Politburo hard-liners were channeling through him. He told Reagan that if he agreed to allow the U.S. to test SDI components in space, “they will call me a fool and an irresponsible leader.”⁴⁴ (Gorbachev was especially aware of the discontent among the top military brass. After the summit, he would tell the Politburo, “[t]he Generals are hissing among themselves” over the concessions he had made.⁴⁵)

When Reagan offered for the umpteenth time to share SDI with the Soviet Union, the Soviet leader retorted that he could not take the President seriously: “You don’t want to share even petroleum equipment, automatic machine tools or

³⁹ Reagan’s dinner toast at the Geneva summit, see Document No. 13.

⁴⁰ The writer Garry Wills was the first to make this movie connection for Reagan’s idea of SDI, in his 1987 book *Reagan’s America: Innocents at Home*.

⁴¹ For the most critical view of SDI, see FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*; for a more reportorial assessment, see Graham, *Hit to Kill*.

⁴² Politburo notes by Anatoly Chernyaev, March 24, 1986, published in Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, p. 29.

⁴³ Document No. 26.

⁴⁴ Document No. 33.

⁴⁵ Document No. 38.

equipment for dairies, while sharing SDI would be a second American revolution. And revolutions do not occur all that often.”⁴⁶ When Reagan asked Gorbachev to allow SDI testing, and to “do it as a favor to me so that we can go to the people as peacemakers,” the Soviet leader was completely unprepared for such a highly personal request. Reagan emphasized that the “text [of the draft agreement] contains everything you have asked for.” But the Soviet demurred: “I can do favors for your farmers, but this is no favor, this is a matter of principle.” Shevardnadze was in the room, along with Shultz, and pleaded, “Let me speak very emotionally, because I feel that we have come very close to accomplishing this historic task. And when future generations read the record of our talks, they will not forgive us if we let this opportunity slip by.”⁴⁷ Yet it slipped.

Why did Gorbachev not call Reagan’s bluff? In fact, it was not a bluff in Reagan’s eyes, even though the Soviet leader had good reason to doubt him since, after all, not a single Reagan cabinet member believed the U.S. could or would share SDI.⁴⁸ Reagan’s national security adviser (until December 1985) Robert McFarlane later wrote, “Reagan did not realize that our military and intelligence officials would never go along with open labs.”⁴⁹ Indeed, U.S. military objections to on-site verification—long after the Soviets were willing—would hold up completion of the START Treaty for years, until 1991. Yet had Reagan ordered an SDI-sharing plan as a result of a deal at Reykjavik to eliminate nuclear weapons, it would have put even the most obstreperous Cold Warriors fighting such U.S.-Soviet cooperation behind the curve of public opinion and in conflict with the significant budgetary pressures on military spending.

One answer to the question of why Gorbachev did not take Reagan up on his proposition came from a Soviet negotiator, in the middle of the night at Reykjavik, while staff on both sides were trying to flesh out and test the radical leaps their leaders were taking in the daytime. “Accepting your offer,” the Kremlin’s top America expert, Georgy Arbatov, commented to U.S. adviser Paul Nitze, “would require an exceptional level of trust. We cannot accept your proposals.”⁵⁰

That was the epitaph for Reykjavik’s collapse. In fact, when the Politburo had discussed their plans and expectations for the summit, failure was one of the envisioned outcomes. They decided that if Reagan was not prepared to meet Gorbachev halfway, the Soviet leader would call the meeting a failure, announce it to the world at the final press conference, and put the blame squarely on Reagan—listing all the major concessions the Soviet side had been willing to make, and citing U.S. intransigence on SDI.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Document No. 29.

⁴⁷ Document Nos. 32 and 33.

⁴⁸ Even the astute Raymond Garthoff later termed the share-SDI concept a “tongue-in-cheek” offer. See *The Great Transition*, p. 782.

⁴⁹ McFarlane and Smardz, *Special Trust*, p. 318.

⁵⁰ Document No. 30.

⁵¹ Document No. 27.

Yet as Gorbachev was walking to the press conference (according to Chernyaev), and as he stood facing a crowd of several thousand who had just heard the Americans call the summit a bust, he did something utterly unpredictable—he decided to speak about Reykjavik as a breakthrough, as a new start that would lead to rapid progress in arms control. Somehow overcoming the trust barrier identified by Arbatov, the Soviet leader had realized that Reagan was sincere—at the very least, in his faith in nuclear abolition. That realization could not have come without a feeling there had been a major missed opportunity, of course, but now Gorbachev was willing to build on Reykjavik, to fight to make it real. On the plane back to Moscow he told his aides he was now even more of an optimist because “everybody saw that agreement is possible.”⁵² Yet even then he could not let go of the SDI focus, or even “untie the package” so as to get rid of the Pershings. Gorbachev told his aides that precisely because they were planning reduction and liquidation of nuclear weapons, “we needed to close off all the roundabout ways that would allow one to rise to superiority” like getting rid of the ABM Treaty and building SDI. Gorbachev saw in the American positions at Reykjavik that “it has not renounced the goal of superiority.”⁵³ (Indeed the Weinberger camp inside the Pentagon spoke frankly about “space dominance” as the goal of SDI spending, even while Reagan himself described the aim as abolishing nuclear weapons.⁵⁴)

In his report about the summit to the Politburo, Gorbachev fed his comrades some red meat about the U.S. president: “As far as Reagan was concerned, we had to struggle at Reykjavik not only with the class enemy, but also with such a representative of our class enemy, who exhibited extreme primitivism, a caveman outlook, and intellectual impotence. But this is not, however, the main reason [for lack of agreement].” Gorbachev went on to put his optimistic spin on the outcome: The two leaders had “reached a new peak, which allowed us to look far beyond the horizon,” and conclude that the time had come for new ambitious proposals to move the process ahead on the basis of understandings reached at the summit.⁵⁵ And indeed, at the Politburo meeting on October 30, Gorbachev dropped his insistence on restricting SDI to the labs—“our new positions are the following: testing is allowed in the air, at ground test sites, but not in space”—thus accepting much of the U.S. position he had just rejected at Reykjavik.⁵⁶ But when Shevardnadze took this new departure to Vienna for the November 5 meetings with Shultz, the Americans declined even to raise the issue, and took back

⁵² Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, October 12, 1986, Document No. 19 in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., “The Reykjavik File.”

⁵³ Document No. 35.

⁵⁴ See FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 157–158.

⁵⁵ Politburo notes, October 14, 1986, Document No. 21 in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., “The Reykjavik File.”

⁵⁶ Politburo notes, October 30, 1986, Document No. 23 in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., “The Reykjavik File.”

Shultz's starting offer at Reykjavik about banning ballistic missiles.⁵⁷ The backlash in Washington and among U.S. allies already had the Reagan administration scurrying away from Reykjavik's radical proposals.

The abolition moment was over. Reagan lost the initiative on the U.S. side, as the allies, the U.S. military, and the foreign policy establishment registered their astonishment that he was prepared to junk the entire mutual-assured-destruction deterrence scheme. (Reagan always referred to it as MAD.) Top aides scrambled to rewrite the Reykjavik story as if the abolition offers had never been made, claiming the U.S. had only discussed eliminating ballistic missiles.⁵⁸ The allies went ballistic because only three years after taking domestic political hits for deploying the Pershing IIs, here was the senior partner in NATO offering unilaterally to discard the entire nuclear-based security structure that lay at the heart of the alliance's strategy. Most effectively, Margaret Thatcher launched herself at Washington to keep Reagan from going wobbly. She gave him an inimitable Iron Lady tutorial in the why's and wherefore's of deterrence, evidently not realizing that he believed such conventional wisdom to be morally abhorrent. And the chastened Reagan apparently did not attempt a tutorial going the other way. (The talking points suggest he was thinking of trying, but the Thatcher press conference afterwards proclaimed he did not.⁵⁹)

White House chief of staff Donald Regan described the communications blitz that followed Reykjavik this way: "Some of us are like a shovel brigade that follows a parade down Main Street, cleaning up."⁶⁰ Then the breaking Iran-contra scandal in November and December 1986 removed key staff like John Poindexter, who might have followed through on the Reykjavik boldness, and replaced them with conventional thinkers like Frank Carlucci and Colin Powell. As early as November 17, 1986, Gorbachev told Chernyaev, "It is now clear that we cannot go below Reykjavik, and the Americans will not go above Reykjavik."⁶¹ Top

⁵⁷ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 292.

⁵⁸ The eloquent account of SDI by Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, which deconstructs the entire shelf of Reagan-era-official memoirs and shows the contradictions among the accounts, including all the backtracking afterwards, uses as its title for this chapter, "What Really Happened at Reykjavik?" Even as FitzGerald wrote, however, the Russian transcript had already been published by the Gorbachev Foundation (and translated by FBIS); the American transcript would be declassified in 1999. See Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., "The Reykjavik File."

⁵⁹ See talking points in Memorandum for the President from George P. Shultz, "Visit of UK Prime Minister Thatcher," November 12, 1986, Document No. 37. Thatcher wrote in her memoir, *The Downing Street Years*, pp. 470–471: "Hearing how far the Americans had been prepared to go [at Reykjavik] was as if there had been an earthquake beneath my feet. The whole system of nuclear deterrence which had kept the peace for forty years was close to being abandoned."

⁶⁰ Speakes and Pack, *Speaking Out*, p. 148, quoted by FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 350.

⁶¹ Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, November 17, 1986, Document No. 27 in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., "The Reykjavik File."

U.S. senators, former secretaries of defense, and most foreign policy mandarins in the U.S. (with leading obtusenik, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in the vanguard) denounced the very idea of nuclear abolition, predicting that the Europeans, “unable to rely on an instant U.S. nuclear response,” would “make their political accommodation with the Soviet Union.”⁶²

The Joint Chiefs weighed in with boots on, insisting that even approaching abolition would require hundreds of billions of dollars of new defense spending, apparently never giving thought to the dramatically improved U.S. security position if ballistic missiles no longer targeted Washington and the Soviets were busy destroying their nuclear weapons in tandem with the United States. The Joint Chiefs chairman, Admiral William Crowe, recalled in his memoir that this was the toughest moment of his military career—having to say “no” to President Reagan about his Reykjavik ideas.⁶³ Yet the actual minutes of a key December 19, 1986, meeting, now declassified, contain much less blunt confrontation. The admiral used phrases like “genuine challenges,” “thorny,” “problematic,” “requiring greater US investment in defenses,” “the downsides of cost and verification,” and called on each of the chiefs in turn to outline what would be a total of \$390 billion of new spending just to make up for the lost ballistic missiles. Reagan “responded by assuring the Chiefs he is not ‘living in a dream world.’ He noted the economic potential of the US and its Allies if there is a will to act; and suggested the Soviets have their own economic problems: ‘The Soviets fear an arms race which they would lose.’... *The President* noted that ‘at the end of Reykjavik we were talking ballistics, and they [the Soviets] brought up the idea of all nuclear weapons’—as if Reagan himself had not mentioned abolition repeatedly at Geneva and at Reykjavik, and as if he and his secretary of state had not immediately agreed to Gorbachev’s idea. “The President said he recently told Prime Minister Thatcher that before ballistic missiles are eliminated, we would have to begin serious negotiations on chemical and conventional reductions to ensure we wouldn’t be placed in an inferior position. *The President* said we needed to go through with this so that the Soviets can see we are serious....”⁶⁴

But Ronald Reagan was the only one in Washington who was serious. Adm. Crowe confessed to the House Armed Services Committee in November 1986, during their review of what happened at Reykjavik, that the Joint Chiefs were studying (skeptically) the zero-ballistic-missile proposal, but not the president’s

⁶² Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 776–777; FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 410–411.

⁶³ See Crowe, *The Line of Fire*, pp. 266–269, for Crowe’s first attempt after Reykjavik to tell the president abolition didn’t make sense and would cost billions more in conventional spending. Reagan apparently responded by changing the subject to his admiration for those in uniform.

⁶⁴ Minutes, JCS Meeting with the President, December 19, 1986, 11:00 – 12:00 PM, Cabinet Room, TOP SECRET, Ronald Reagan Library, released to the authors under MOI-014 #3 (2005).

plan to share SDI technology with the USSR: “I do think it a little premature to study in isolation just a transfer of technology without knowing what we are talking about.”⁶⁵ The president could promise, but his establishment would do its best to prevent any such idealistic common security notions, unless they were ordered otherwise.

Reagan himself saw both Geneva and Reykjavik as wonderful theater, worthy of re-staging again and again. At a February 10, 1987, meeting of the national security principals (the NSPG, or National Security Planning Group), he said yet again that he wanted to proceed with a combination of sharing SDI and eliminating nuclear weapons, just as he had proposed at Geneva and Reykjavik, and only Kenneth Adelman of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, who had perhaps been the most shocked by Reykjavik of all the senior officials, challenged him, saying neither was really possible.⁶⁶ In this account, everyone else in the room simply maintained their passive-aggressive style of managing the president, and the Reykjavik possibilities died a slow death, starved by ignorance, bias, and misperception. A subsequent briefing paper from the Joint Chiefs backing up the \$390 billion gambit even claimed that “[i]f the Soviets accepted elimination of their ballistic missiles” (the likelihood of which was “extremely low” said the chiefs), “they would probably begin a major buildup of other strategic offensive forces”!⁶⁷ The absurdity of such an assessment unfortunately was the norm in Washington after Reykjavik and all the way to the signing of the START Treaty in the summer of 1991, long after Gorbachev’s star had waned.

In fact, at the time, despite harsh rhetoric in the Politburo, Chernyaev saw a real change in Gorbachev’s perceptions after Reykjavik.

[A]pparently Reagan intuitively felt something naturally human in this initiative, so unexpected from a Soviet leader. His “hasty” agreement confirms it. But he was immediately halted by his entourage. Later he had to pay for this “mistake,” which was put down to incompetence. But in fact it showed a lot of simple wisdom long missing in world politics. Gorbachev saw it and repeatedly returned to this incident in Reykjavik. I believe it was then, at that very moment, that he became convinced that it would “work out” between him and Reagan. That the U.S. president, not much interested in the minutiae of the arms talks, had intuitively felt “the challenge of the times.” A spark of understanding was born between them, as if they had winked to each other

⁶⁵ Admiral William Crowe, U.S. House Armed Services Committee hearings, quoted in Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 546.

⁶⁶ The most detailed, although obviously self-serving, report of this conversation is in Adelman, *The Great Universal Embrace*, pp. 316–319.

⁶⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Appendix A, Baseline Plan, Executive Summary, Tab 1 attached to Memorandum for Frank C. Carlucci, From: Linton Brooks, Subject: Breakfast Item—25 February—NSDD 250, February 23, 1987, Ronald Reagan Library, released to the authors in MOI-014 #1 and #2 (2005).

about the future. And Gorbachev retained a certain sense of trust in this person. After Reykjavik, he never again spoke about Reagan in his inner circle as he had before.⁶⁸

Years later, Gorbachev responded strongly when Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney denigrated Reagan by saying, “You know, Reagan spoke from his [index] cards even when we spoke on the phone. Bush is a completely different person.” Gorbachev replied, “But you cannot deny Reagan’s impressive political intuition.”⁶⁹ To the Politburo in October 1986, Gorbachev commented, “We understand the president’s problems, he is not free in his decisions,” and emphasized, “[i]ndeed, before we were talking about limitations on nuclear arms. Now we are talking about their reduction and elimination.”⁷⁰

What if Reagan and Gorbachev had been able to abolish nuclear weapons at Reykjavik? Jack Matlock believed that the proposals were just too ambitious ever to work, and certainly the two leaders would have faced continued enormous resistance from their military establishments; but they would have enjoyed the advantage of overwhelming public approval, and probably the blessing of the Nobel Peace Prize as well. Gorbachev’s aides believe that such arms control success would have given him the national security cards he needed to change the political system, the budgetary savings to avoid fiscal collapse, and perhaps the prestige to succeed with his strategy of installing “little Gorbachevs” in Eastern Europe.⁷¹ Would such success have delayed the miracle year of 1989, or would an even more demilitarized Soviet system have made the 1989 regime changes easier, faster, cleaner?

Even Matlock concluded the lasting impact of Reykjavik was the interactive effect on Gorbachev of Reagan’s abolitionism: “What the meeting did do, and this was of profound importance, was convince Gorbachev eventually that Reagan genuinely desired to end the arms race. However, this was not a conclusion that Gorbachev reached immediately. Emotions were too raw; and the mutual feeling of betrayal too intense, to permit calm judgment. Relations were to take a severe beating for several months to come.”⁷²

⁶⁸ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 85.

⁶⁹ Gorbachev-Mulroney memcon, November 21, 1989, Document No. 101 in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*.

⁷⁰ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 87.

⁷¹ A representative and insightful discussion of these possibilities may be found in Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*.

⁷² Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 242.

Document No. 20: Letter from Gorbachev to Reagan

January 14, 1986

This letter contains Gorbachev's groundbreaking proposal to eliminate nuclear weapons completely: "by the end of 1999 no more nuclear weapons remain on earth." Unlike the litany of earlier Soviet statements about abolishing nuclear weapons—always dismissed as propaganda—this one contains a specific three-stage plan drafted by the Soviet General Staff under the leadership of Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev in consultation with Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Kornienko. General Viktor Starodubov, a senior arms control expert, mentions that the planners felt the time was right to present it to Gorbachev after his meeting with Reagan in Geneva.⁷³ Gorbachev approved the program in December 1985 and presented it publicly on January 15.

The program envisioned three stages. First stage: 50 percent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons (5 to 8 years) and an agreement to eliminate all medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe; second stage: starting in 1990, Britain, France and China join the process by freezing their arsenals, all nuclear powers eliminate their tactical weapons and ban nuclear testing; third stage: "starting in 1995, liquidation of all still remaining nuclear weapons is completed." An important element of the Soviet program was a ban on space weapons and strict adherence to the ABM Treaty. Because of the lack of immediate response, Gorbachev always believed that his program was never taken seriously in the West, and was treated as propaganda. Gorbachev was mistaken—his proposal produced quite an unprecedented degree of study and debates in Washington.

In fact, recently declassified documents reveal that Reagan launched a serious and thorough process within the administration to study the feasibility of the Soviet proposal and ways to respond to it given his own interest in nuclear abolition. In addition to internal deliberations, which produced two NSPG meetings and two National Security Decision Directives, Ambassadors Nitze and Rowny were sent to consult with the allies.⁷⁴ There was a considerable difference of opinions within the administration: from George Shultz arguing for engaging Gorbachev and his program to Caspar Weinberger claiming it was just an effort to "divert energy" and to kill SDI. The consultations with the allies showed that responding to the Soviet program would be too costly in terms of NATO solidarity. Margaret Thatcher was strongly against any idea that would eliminate the U.S. nuclear umbrella and undermine deterrence.⁷⁵ Chancellor Kohl was an outlier, supporting "both the goal of total elimination and zero/zero INF in Europe." In the end, the Reagan administration

⁷³ Starodubov, *Ot razoruzheniya k kapitulatsii*, pp. 261–262.

⁷⁴ National Security Decision Directive No. 210 and No. 214, February 4 and 21, 1986, and Poindexter Memorandum for the President "Allied Views on a Response to Gorbachev," circa February 15, 1986, Ronald Reagan Library, Linhard Box 3, RAC Box 8.

⁷⁵ Letter from Prime Minister Thatcher to President Reagan, February 11, 1986, Ronald Reagan Library, Linhard Box 4, RAC Box 9.

did not dismiss the proposal as propaganda, it just came to the conclusion that they were not ready for a program of such a scope.

Dear Mr. President,

After our meeting in Geneva where we agreed that the questions of security are central for our relations, I have carefully thought through the ways to implement the decisions of principle, which were taken as a result of our meeting.

I am convinced that we should work for packing the period till the next planned Soviet-American summit with constructive efforts of both sides aimed at achieving concrete agreements, first of all, on the urgent problems of arms limitation and reduction. I am, certainly far from being forgetful about the major differences which remain between our approaches to the resolution of these problems. But all these things notwithstanding, it is also impossible to deny that there exist now serious prerequisites to overcome the difficulties we face and, without wasting time, to arrive at mutually acceptable agreements in the interests of enhancing the security of all the peoples. A foundation for that is the joint document in which we clearly expressed ourselves in favor of preventing nuclear as well as conventional war between our countries, reaffirmed our mutual willingness to follow the path of policy ruling out the seeking of military superiority.

Now this declaration has to be substantiated by concrete actions. A whole series of opportunities exists in this regard. The task is to make use of them in practice. We are for casting aside the stereotypes and outdated modes of thinking, hindering the advance movement, and for tackling in a bold and new manner the resolution of issues which you and I simply do not have the right to postpone.

In your New Year address to the people of the Soviet Union you said that it was your dream to one day free mankind from the threat of nuclear destruction. But why make the realization of this dream conditional on the development of new types of weapons—space weapons in this case? Why take this extremely dangerous path—which does not hold a promise for disarmament, when it is possible already now to get down to freeing the world from the existing arsenals?

We propose a different path, which will really enable us to enter the third millennium [sic] without nuclear weapons. Instead of spending the next 10–15 years developing new sophisticated weapons in space, which are allegedly intended to make nuclear weapons “obsolete” and “impotent”, wouldn’t it be better to address those weapons themselves and take that time to reduce them to zero? Let us agree on a stage-by-stage program which would lead to a complete nuclear disarmament everywhere already by the turn of the next century.

The Soviet Union envisages the following procedure of the reduction of nuclear weapons—both delivery vehicles and warheads—down to their complete liquidation.

The first stage. It would last approximately [sic] 5–8 years. During this period the USSR and US would reduce by half their nuclear weapons reaching the

territories of each other. There would remain no more than 6000 warheads on the delivery vehicles still in their possession.

It goes without saying that such reductions take place on the basis of the mutual renunciation by the USSR and US of the development, testing and deployment of attack space weapons. As the Soviet Union has repeatedly warned, the development of space weapons will dash the hopes for reductions of nuclear weapons on Earth.

The Soviet Union, as is known, has long been proposing that Europe be freed from nuclear weapons, both medium range and tactical. We are in favor of reaching and implementing already at the first stage a decision to eliminate completely the medium range missiles of the USSR and US in the European zone—both ballistic and cruise missiles as the first step towards freeing the European continent from nuclear weapons. In this context, naturally, the US would have to assume the obligation not to transfer its strategic and medium range missiles to other countries, and Britain and France—not to build up their corresponding nuclear weapons.

From the outset, in our view, it is necessary for the USSR and US to agree to cease all nuclear explosions and to call upon other states to join such moratorium as soon as possible. I shall return to this issue later.

The second stage. It has to start no later than 1990 and last 5–7 years. Britain, France and China start to join nuclear disarmament. To begin with they could assume the obligation to freeze all their nuclear armaments and not to have them on the territories [sic] of other countries.

The USSR and US continue the reduction on which they agreed at the first stage and carry out further measures to liquidate their medium range nuclear weapons, and freeze their tactical nuclear systems. After the USSR and US complete the reduction by 50 percent of their relevant armaments, another radical step is taken—all nuclear powers liquidate their tactical nuclear weapons, that is, systems with ranges (radius of action) of up to 1000 kilometers.

At this stage the Soviet-American agreement to ban attack space weapons must become multilateral, necessarily involving all leading industrial powers.

All nuclear powers would cease nuclear testing. A prohibition would be introduced on the development of nonnuclear weapons based on new physical principles, which by their destructive capabilities come close to nuclear or other systems of mass destruction.

No later than 1995 *the third stage* will start. During this stage the liquidation of all still remaining nuclear weapons is completed. By the end of 1999 no more nuclear weapons remain on Earth. A universal agreement is worked out that these weapons shall never be resurrected again.

It is envisaged that special procedures will be worked out for the destruction of nuclear weapons as well as for the dismantling [sic], conversion or destruction of their delivery vehicles. In this context agreement will be reached on the quantities of weapons to be destroyed at each stage, the places where they will be destroyed, etc.

The verification of the weapons destroyed or limited would be carried out both by national technical means and by on-site inspection. The USSR is prepared to come to terms on any other additional verification measures.

All this'll become possible if we close the way for the arms race in outer space. I would like to hope, that you, Mr. President, will consider this question with all the attention it deserves.

In connection with the problem of nuclear arms, I would like to address once again the question of the cessation of nuclear explosions. We have already discussed it with you at length, in [sic] particular in our correspondence. In your letter of December 24 you say that nuclear tests are "important to ensure the safety, reliability and effectiveness of nuclear weapons." Such is your argument. It appears to us, however, that a different approach is required. It should be considered: what would provide greater security—the cessation or the countinuation [sic] of nuclear explosions? Our conclusion is that it is the cessation of explosions, which would bring enormous, really tangible benefits both for enhancing the security of the USSR and USA and for strengthening strategic stability.

Guided by the objective of facilitating the termination of the nuclear arms race, the Soviet Union has taken the decision to prolong its unilateral moratorium on any nuclear explosions for three more months. I think, there is no need to prove the significance of this action. Moreover, this is a practical demonstration of the restraint on the need to excercise [sic] which we agreed with you in Geneva. I will be frank, we made this step intending to give to the American side additional time for taking a decision, which is expected from Washington by world public, a decision that the American side, too, will stop its nuclear tests.

Should the moratorium become mutual, it would give a powerfull [sic] impetus to reaching agreements on the limitation and reduction of nuclear armaments, to strengthening and broadening the mutual trust. The questions of verification do not represent an obstacle. Here we could go far—up to, if necessary, mutual on-site inspections for verifying the non-conducting of the explosions. The Soviet side is ready in principle to discuss the questions of verification on the level of experts, but of verification precisely of the non-conducting of nuclear explosions, and not of anything else.

As to the question you raised of centers to reduce nuclear risk, it could become a subject for discussion at the upcoming round of the Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear and space weapons.

We are convinced that there exist good opportunities for moving forward as regards the banning and non-proliferation of chemical weapons, the resolution of the issues discussed in Vienna and Stockholm. The Soviet delegations to the relevant fora [sic] have clear-cut instructions to work towards successful accomplishments there through joint efforts of all the participants in the talks. We proceed from the assumption that the American side, too, will act in the same direction.

I hope that the new major initiatives I outlined will be considered by you, Mr. President, with all the seriousness and that a positive response to them will follow.

I also would like to hope that agreements on the range of problems I addressed would become a weighty asset of our upcoming meeting with you. We are ready—at various levels—to work together for the sake of ensuring its success. Such a success, of course, will be possible if the striving for it is shown by practical deeds on both sides.

Sincerely,
M. Gorbachev

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, Head of State File, Soviet Union, obtained through FOIA F99-060/1, document 248, by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 21: Letter from Reagan to Gorbachev

February 22, 1986

This lengthy (almost eight pages) typed (not handwritten) letter contains Reagan's formal endorsement of nuclear abolition, in response to Gorbachev's January 15 proposals. The letter suggests a series of specific steps, starting with the 50% cut in warheads the two leaders had discussed at Geneva, then getting rid of INF missiles by 1989 (the deal would be done in 1987), then bringing in the other nuclear powers after the U.S. and USSR demonstrate their seriousness by going first, while linking the process of nuclear cuts to reductions in conventional forces in Europe, and so forth. Most interesting is Reagan's explicit endorsement of Gorbachev's January proposals as "significant and positive"—at a time when other U.S. officials were dismissing the abolition initiative as propaganda, when that message echoed in the U.S. media as well to such an extent that Gorbachev would complain in his April 2, 1986 letter about such dismissals and the "increasingly vehement philippics" directed against the USSR. But here we see Reagan taking the idea very seriously. Yet the delay between the mid-January proposals and this late-February response left the Soviets believing the U.S. was not interested, especially compared to the Indians who immediately embraced the package, while the silence from Washington was deafening. Some of the delay clearly arose from differences between President Reagan and his bureaucracy over embracing abolition; but part of it also stemmed from the Soviet insistence on the test ban as part of the abolition program even though that was a non-starter both for Reagan and his bureaucracy. In fact, the test ban back-and-forth starting in December 1985 (see Document 21) would consume much of the available bandwidth between the two leaders after Geneva: Gorbachev would even propose (April 2, 1986 letter) a formal summit just on the test ban, which Reagan would almost instantly reject (April 11). After the Chernobyl nuclear accident (April 26, 1986), Reagan would write with condolences, and with regrets that because of misunderstandings "we have lost a full six months"; and Gorbachev would respond with a rhetorical letter (June 1, 1986) about nuclear safety, restating his failed call on Reagan for a test ban summit. So despite the high-level meeting-of-the-minds on nuclear abolition visible in this February letter, any breakthrough towards a summit would not come until September.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

The elimination of nuclear weapons has been an American goal for decades, from our proposals at the dawn of the nuclear age to my vision of a nuclear-free world made possible through the reliance of our countries on defense rather than on the threat of nuclear retaliation. [...]

It is in this spirit that I have studied with great care your letter of January 14, your January 15 statement to the Soviet people, and your subsequent statements on the prospects for progress in arms control. I believe they represent a significant and positive step forward. [...]

Of course, if we are to move toward a world in which the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons will be possible, there must be far greater trust and confidence between our two countries than exists at present. We cannot simply wave away the suspicion and misunderstandings which have developed over the past four decades between our two countries. The process of reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons can by itself nurture greater confidence and trust. But there will be many in my country, and I believe in yours, who will question the wisdom of eliminating nuclear weapons—which both sides see as the ultimate guarantor of their security—if they see the other's conduct as threatening. This leads me to three general observations.

First, it will be vitally necessary as we move down this path to ensure the most stringent verification, with measures far more comprehensive and exacting than in any previous agreement. [...]

My second point is that any sustained effort to resolve our basic security concerns must go hand-in-hand with concrete steps to move ahead in other areas of our relationship—non-nuclear military issues, regional problems, human rights, and bilateral ties. [...]

Finally, as you know, the United States and its allies must rely today on nuclear weapons to deter conventional as well as nuclear conflict. This is due in large part to the significant imbalance that currently exists between the conventional forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. [...]

As for the specifics of your proposal, we certainly agree on the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons as soon as we have achieved the conditions for a world which makes that goal feasible. We also agree on the need to get on with the first steps towards creating those conditions now. The pace of progress towards any target date would have to depend on our ability to arrive at mutually acceptable guarantees to ensure that the security of the United States, the Soviet Union and our respective friends and allies is in no sense diminished along the way. [...]

I can also agree with several of your ideas on how this program would proceed. There are other details, however, that would require modification before I could accept them. [...]

In the defense and space area, your proposal was ambiguous with regard to strategic defense research. I continue to believe that limits on research could be counterproductive and, in any case, could not be verified; therefore, they must not be included in an agreement. Beyond research, as I suggested in Geneva, if there were no nuclear missiles, then there might also be no need for defenses against them. But I am convinced that some non-nuclear defenses could make a vital contribution to security and stability. In any event, our negotiators in Geneva should thoroughly examine how we could make a transition to a world involving the increasing contribution of such defenses.

With respect to nuclear testing, I believe that, so long as we rely on nuclear weapons as an element of deterrence, we must continue to test in order to ensure their continued safety, security and reliability. However, as I wrote to you in December, I see no reason why we should not consider the matter of nuclear testing

as we move forward on other arms control subjects. I suggested we establish a bilateral dialogue aimed at constructive steps in this field. I remain hopeful you will take up this offer.

Finally, although your proposal seems to recognize that the crucial first step is substantial bilateral U.S. and Soviet nuclear reductions, it also attaches certain conditions regarding the forces of the United Kingdom and France. As you know, the United States can make no commitments for other nuclear powers, nor can we agree to bilateral U.S.-Soviet arrangements which would suggest otherwise. The negotiations of limitations on third country nuclear systems is solely the responsibility and prerogative of the governments concerned. [...]

In summary, I would propose that the process toward our agreed goal of eliminating nuclear weapons include the following elements:

Initial Steps. I believe that these steps should involve reduction in and limits on nuclear, conventional, and chemical weapons as follows:

1. The U.S. and the USSR would reduce the number of warheads on their strategic ballistic missiles to 4500 and the number of ALCMs on their heavy bombers to 1500 resulting in no more than a total number of 6000 such warheads on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. These reductions would be carried out in such a way as to enhance stability.
2. In the INF area, by 1987 both the United States and the Soviet Union would limit their LRINF missile deployments in Europe to no more than 140 launchers each, with the Soviet Union making concurrent, proportionate reductions in Asia. Within the following year, both sides would further reduce the numbers of LRINF launchers remaining in Europe and Asia by an additional 50%. Finally, both sides would move to the total elimination of this category of weapons by the end of 1989.
3. Research programs on strategic defenses would be conducted in accord with treaty obligations.
4. The U.S. and the USSR would establish an effective MBFR verification regime and carry out initial reductions in manpower levels along the lines of the recent Western proposal at the MBFR negotiations; they would then begin a process of moving on to a balance of non-nuclear capabilities in Europe.
5. Concrete and meaningful confidence-building measures designed to make the European military environment more open, predictable, and stable would be initiated.
6. An effective, comprehensive worldwide ban on the development, production, possession, and transfer of chemical weapons would be instituted, with strict verification measures including international on-site inspection.

Subsequent steps. Subsequent steps could involve other nuclear powers and would aim at further reductions and increasingly strict limits, ultimately leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We would embark on this process as soon as the steps encompassed in the first stage are completed. The goal would

be to complete the process as soon as the conditions for a non-nuclear world had been achieved. [...]

I hope that this concept provides a mutually acceptable route to a goal that all the world shares. I look forward to your response and to working with you in the coming months in advancing this most important effort. [...]

Sincerely,
[signed]

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 22: Record of Conversation between Gorbachev and Members of the U.S. Congress Fascell and Broomfield

April 4, 1986

Gorbachev receives U.S. Congressmen and gives a feisty performance, partly in reaction to what he sees as an absence of response on the U.S. part to his proposal on total elimination of nuclear weapons in ten years (see Document No. 20). He talks like the leader of the other superpower stating that they do not intend to “close America.” The Soviet leader lists the new proposals and initiatives that his government made in the period since Geneva—extending its nuclear testing moratorium, agreeing to “accept any forms of oversight” in terms of inspections, agreeing not to count the British and French nuclear weapons, and mainly—the bold January 15 initiative. From Gorbachev’s point of view, he got no response to any of these steps, instead, “[they] were told about the alleged Soviet superiority in conventional weapons, about chemical weapons, about tactical means.” He is impatient to move ahead in reversing the arms race, and ready to address all these issues but feels that the momentum achieved in Geneva has been lost. Dante Fascell agrees with Gorbachev that the best way to test the seriousness of his intentions would be to respond to his proposals, but he concludes that “the reality is such that the United States is not ready, for some reason—either political or military, I don’t know—they are not capable to make the big leap, which you are calling for, at this time.” Still he believes that it would be better for Gorbachev to try to achieve agreements with the present administration and not wait for the next elections, because “Reagan is the most popular president in the history of the United States since Roosevelt.”

Gorbachev: Greetings to you. I want to express my appreciation for this opportunity to meet and talk to you. It is good that the contacts between U.S. Congress and the Supreme Soviet representatives have been energized. Some time ago they were stopped completely. Both sides should think about the substance [of these contacts] so that they would not remain just a ballast.

Fascell: I want to state from the start that we are very happy with this trip and appreciate the honor to be received by you.

We would like to hand to you the letter from President Reagan. [...]

Gorbachev: Listens to the translation of the letter, thanks [the Congressmen].

Judging by the first impressions of the content of the letter, I can say that we share the thoughts expressed in it about the need to continue [our] efforts to improve our relations, which we started in Geneva. The letter contains other statements similar to what we are saying too. You know that in Geneva the President and I, jointly and individually, stated that our meetings are useful and should be held, that our common goal should be the improvement of relations between our two countries. We signed a joint statement, which states that there could be no winners in a nuclear war and it should never be unleashed.

Moreover, we wrote in the joint statement that neither of the sides would strive for military superiority. It means that we are thinking the same thoughts. However, when it comes to implementing agreements, then something does not work. I would like to know your opinion about this—why is it so? [...]

When I was waiting for your arrival, and the journalists came here, I told them that, in my view, it is very important to understand two realities well. We agree that the United States is a powerful state, with whom we have to live. It is a reality. In the same way, the United States has to accept the reality of the Soviet Union. One character of our satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin used to say that he wanted to “close America.” The Soviet Union does not have such an intention. And even if we had such an intention, “this would not depend on us.”

Fascell: And we do not have any intention to “close” the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev: And this is very important. The American people chose their way of life, their government. The Soviet Union made their choice. If we started questioning the choice of the American people, what would come out of it? What kind of policy would it be? Policy should be built on realities, on the understanding that every nation has a right to choose its way of life, its system of government, on its own. At the same time, of course, we understand that you do not like some aspects of our policies, our life.

Fascell: Trust, mutual understanding—these are the most important things that we need. And I think that this kind of contacts between us are the only road to establishing trust. [...]

I am convinced that we absolutely must stop this kind of ping-pong that we have been engaged in lately. I have to say that you are good at it.

Gorbachev: We were thinking, as a matter of fact, that we had put an end to this kind of ping-pong in Geneva, that there we laid down the starting line for a real, realistic policy in relations between our two countries.

Fascell: We also thought so.

Gorbachev: And so, do you think that it is us who turned away from this road?

Fascell: No, I don't think so.

Gorbachev: Truly, look at what we were doing after Geneva. When we came back from Geneva, and the term of our unilateral nuclear testing moratorium came up, we extended this moratorium for three extra months, because we wanted to set an example, take practical steps in accordance with the Geneva agreements. We took those steps and invited the United States to reciprocate.

On January 15, we presented a 15-year multi-stage program of disarmament measures, envisioning liquidation of nuclear weapons by the end of this century. By the way, we developed this program very carefully, trying to ensure a mutually acceptable balance of interests at every stage, so that nobody's security interests would be undermined at any stage. Any other approach would have been simply unrealistic, even if we or you proposed it.

We called for a cessation of nuclear testing because we saw this measure as a simple step, which also would be based on the experience we had already

accumulated. Truly, we have a treaty banning nuclear testing in three spheres, an agreement to limit underground nuclear testing, we also conducted negotiations on a complete ban on all nuclear testing. Thus we have a good base, good experience. Before, we had difficulties with the issue of inspections. Taking this into account, we announced our readiness to accept any forms of oversight—whether national technical means, [or] international control with participation of third countries adjacent to us. We thought this position was realistic. We are convinced that the resolution of this issue would be a good thing for both of our countries, for the entire world.

Fascell: I understand completely.

Gorbachev: On the issue of intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe, the problem of counting the British and French nuclear potential created difficulties [for us]. Before, we demanded that the United States remove their missiles [of this range] from Europe and expressed our willingness in that case to reduce the number of our missiles to the level equivalent to the number of the British and French nuclear means. But we did not reach an agreement on this basis. Then we decided to make a step in your direction and stated that we are not demanding to count the British and French nuclear means in an agreement, but are willing to agree that Britain and France would just abstain from increasing their nuclear potential. We thought we made a real step to meet the other side halfway and were waiting for an appropriate response.

And what did we hear in response? What was the reaction? In response we were told that the new Soviet proposal only puts everybody in a difficult situation. We were told about the alleged Soviet superiority in conventional weapons, about chemical weapons, about tactical means. Our proposals cover all of those [issues]. But we thought that in order to make negotiations easier, one needs to make a first step, and we proposed such a first step. And along the way, we explained additionally that we propose to solve this issue without linking it to strategic weapons or to the space.

The answer we received, to sum it up, could be characterized as purely negative. The United States decided to hide behind the opinions of its allies—West European countries and Japan, otherwise, it would be hard for them to justify their negative position.

Fascell: I cannot agree with this. [...]

I hope that when A.F. Dobrynin starts his discussions in the United States, he would have everything necessary so that we could after all make some progress. Because I believe sincerely that we can achieve something useful and reasonable if only we stop what we have been engaged in during the recent days, and think seriously what to do next. We understand that progress here should come in such a way that it does not undermine your positions and your principles. It is quite natural, and we do not demand anything from you, which we will not do ourselves. But I think that the road is open, and there exists an opportunity to move ahead, to continue [our] work on the basis of the method that you and the President used so successfully in Geneva.

Gorbachev: I want to say the following: during the long period of time when the campaign against us was winding up in the United States, I did not make any comments, only observed this strange competition where the President, the Secretary of State, Mr. Weinberger, members of U.S. Congress—all took part in it. A lot of things directed against us were said, they even remembered the “evil empire” and said that this characterization was correct. All this could be partially explained by the rhetorical needs and that is why I abstained from comments at first. [...]

But then there were more serious things—the demand that the Soviet Union cut by 40 percent the number of its diplomats in New York, the appearance of the American naval squadron in the Soviet territorial waters, the action against Libya, which was not limited to the show of force, but included an actual strike against that country.

Is it that they in Washington think that they deal with people with weak nerves? Is it that they think that now we can act like obsessive gamblers? Is that how they understand the spirit of Geneva in the United States? After all these steps, we should really start thinking [what to do] lest our friends in Washington do not get an impression that we here in the Soviet Union are these meek bunnies, who are willing to sit quietly and wait for mercy from Washington. [...]

Gorbachev: In the sphere of Soviet-American relations, more than anywhere else, we need new thinking. [...]

In our time, it is impossible to ensure security by military means.

One more illusion is that one can ensure their own security to the detriment of other's security. It is crucially important to get rid of this illusion in Soviet-American relations.

Fascell: I agree with you.

Gorbachev: I constantly read relevant information and I came to a conclusion that we know practically everything about what you are doing, and you know practically everything that we are doing. And this [knowledge] strengthens my conviction that an effort to construct one's foreign policy on the aspiration for superiority is illusory. I spoke about all this at the CPSU Congress, where we stated clearly and openly how we see the modern world and the role of our two countries—the USSR and the USA—in this world.

Fascell: I must say that your speech at the Congress created a very strong impression, it was distinctly forward-looking and people greatly admired the political skill and the economic perspective that it put forward. We understand that you are ready to seriously tackle the important issues in relations between our countries, the issues of ensuring peace. [...]

Gorbachev: I would like to return to our relations as a matter of principle.

I would like to repeat the main thing—we need to give up the efforts to build our relations on illusions and prejudices. We, on our part, undertook a thorough and realistic analysis of the global situation and the U.S. [global] role, and we came to an absolutely definitive conclusion: while denying the hegemonic claims by the United States and their aspirations to play some kind of special role, we at

the same time acknowledge that the United States is a reality, and even more so, the most serious reality among the countries, with which we interact. The United States has legitimate interests and we acknowledge the U.S. role in international affairs, the contribution of the American people to the development of the world civilization and the fact that one cannot resolve global problems, and first of all the problem of ensuring peace, without the United States. We want all of this to be reflected in our practical policy. That is why we are trying to improve relations between our countries, [we] want to achieve mutual understanding between the USSR and the USA, and primarily—in the resolution of issues, on which the fate of the world rests.

How is this all reflected in the minds of the American politicians? This is how: the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union are perceived as signs of weakness.

Recently, we received information that the U.S. Congress undertook a comprehensive analysis of the plans of economic and social development of the USSR in the light of the materials of the CPSU Congress. The authors of this analysis believe that the Soviet Union is interested in disarmament because it badly needs resources for its economic development. And what conclusion do they come to? This is their conclusion: we need to use this interest of the Soviet Union in order to squeeze unilateral concessions, such [concessions] which they would not agree to in other circumstances.

Fascell: I have never heard about such conclusions. Maybe something like this is present in some people's minds but I think that it would be impossible to realize such intentions.

Gorbachev: The next thesis of this analysis: the Soviet Union is calling for cessation of nuclear testing. The USSR wants to achieve this goal so badly that Gorbachev himself engages in this campaign. They draw the following conclusion: the United States should continue testing. [...]

That is why we were hoping that the President would respond to our proposal positively. We are often accused of making propaganda proposals. Well, if it is propaganda, then why not catch Gorbachev at his word, why not test his intentions by accepting our proposal.

Fascell: You know, an element of political games and propaganda is probably present in everything, but I think you are right—from the political point of view it would be best to test your intentions by responding to your proposals. However, the reality is such that the United States is not ready, for some reason—either political or military, I don't know—they are not capable to make the big leap, which you are calling for, at this time. [...]

You know, I represent the Democratic party and I did not vote for President Reagan in the last elections. But I met with him numerous times and discussed many issues. I became convinced that he completely sincerely aspires to achieve some agreement between our countries, which would allow us to reduce tensions and to stop the arms race. And the fact that there are two such leaders now on the political arena—the President and you, a person who inspires a great deal of

interest and admiration—without exaggeration, creates a unique opportunity, the like of which we had not had for a long time, and may not have soon again. Of course, in the next election, I will be supporting my party again. But I want to assure you that Reagan is the most popular president in the history of the United States since Roosevelt.

The new President will be a new person, and he will need a couple of years to figure out which door in the White House is which.

Therefore, the best situation for an agreement is now, when we have the new leadership on your side, a new energy, and on our side you have a President who wants to go in history as a peacemaker. It is also important that he will be able to garner support for this from the American people.

Gorbachev: Well then, let us search for a step that we could make jointly. But I repeat—a meeting would be useful and the atmosphere in our relations will improve only if we are able to find an issue, which is substantively important, an agreement on which would genuinely mean a big step ahead after Geneva. In the opposite case, if we just keep exchanging pleasantries, and meanwhile the arms race will continue and spread to other spheres, then it would be a real deception. I don't know how such deception would look from the moral point of view in the United States, but it is not acceptable for our morality.

If the United States needs more time in order to think through what is happening and to take a responsible decision, then we are willing to wait. But one thing cannot be postponed—the issues of disarmament. Because the locomotive keeps rushing forward with a great speed. Today we still have the opportunity to stop it, but tomorrow it might be too late already. That is why in my speeches I so persistently emphasize the need to act now. I want to be understood correctly. We are not trying to hide the fact that we are genuinely interested in [disarmament], but [you] need to see the reasons for this interest of ours. So far, I cannot say that they understand me correctly in the United States.

Fascell: Truly, it is very important that you are correctly understood. And that is why it is so important to use any opportunity for contacts and improving mutual understanding. This process in itself is absolutely necessary. [...]

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 23: Letter from Gorbachev to Reagan

September 15, 1986

This letter, hand-carried by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to Washington, was the impetus for the Reykjavik summit meeting, which Gorbachev initially envisioned as “a quick one-on-one meeting, let us say in Iceland or in London,” in order to break out of the cycle of spy-versus-spy posturing and inconclusive diplomatic negotiations that followed the 1985 Geneva summit. The American translation includes Reagan’s underlining, notably the sentence accusing the U.S. of deliberately finding a “pretext” to “aggravate” relations, and two sentences about “no start” having been made on implementing the Geneva agreements and the failure to move “an inch closer to an agreement on arms reduction.”

Dear Mr. President,

I chose to send this letter with E.A. Shevardnadze, who is leaving for the United States to attend the session of the United Nations General Assembly. He is also planning, as has been agreed, to visit Washington and to discuss thoroughly the questions of interest to both sides.

After we received your letter of July 25, 1986, which has been given careful consideration, certain developments and incidents of a negative nature have taken place. This is yet another indication of how sensitive relations between the USSR and the United States are and how important it is for the top leaders of the two countries to keep them constantly within view and exert a stabilizing influence whenever the amplitude of their fluctuations becomes threatening.

Among such incidents—of the kind that have happened before and that, presumably, no one can be guaranteed against in the future—is the case of Zakharov and Daniloff. It requires a calm examination, investigation, and a search for mutually acceptable solutions. However the US side has unduly dramatized that incident. A massive hostile campaign has been launched against our country, which has been taken up at the higher levels of the United States administration and Congress. It is as if a pretext was deliberately sought to aggravate Soviet-American relations and to increase tension. [...]

Having studied your letter and the proposals contained therein, I began to think where they would lead in terms of seeking solutions.

First. You are proposing that we should agree that the ABM Treaty continue to exist for another 5 to 7 years, while activities to destroy it would go ahead. Thus, instead of making headway, there would be something that complicates even what has been achieved.

We have proposed that any work on anti-missile systems be confined to laboratories. In response, we witness attempts to justify the development of space weapons and their testing at test sites, and declarations, made in advance, of the

intention to start in five to seven years deploying large-scale ABM systems and thus to nullify the Treaty. It is, of course, fully understood that we will not agree to that. We see here a bypass route to securing military superiority.

I trust, Mr. President, you recall our discussion of this subject in Geneva. At that time I said that should the United States rush with weapons into space, we would not help it. We would do our utmost to devalue such efforts and make them futile. You may rest assured that we have every means to achieve this and, should the need arise, we shall use those means.

We favor the strengthening of the ABM Treaty regime. This is precisely the reason for our position that work should be confined to laboratories and that the Treaty should be strictly observed for a period of up to 15 years. Should this be the case, it would be possible—and this is our proposal—to agree on significant reduction in strategic offensive arms. We are prepared to do this without delay, and it would thereby be demonstrated in practice that neither side seeks military superiority.

Second. As far as medium-range missiles are concerned the Soviet Union has proposed an optimum solution—complete elimination of U.S. and Soviet missiles in Europe. We have also agreed to an interim option—and that, without taking into account the modernization of British and French nuclear systems.

Following our well-known steps towards accommodation, the issue of verification would seem no longer to be an obstacle. Yet, the U.S. side has now “discovered” another obstacle, namely, Soviet medium-range missiles in Asia. Nevertheless, I believe that here, as well, a mutually acceptable formula can be found and I am ready to propose one, provided there is certainty that a willingness to resolve the issue of medium-range missiles in Europe does exist.

Third. The attitude of the United States to the moratorium on nuclear testing is a matter of deep disappointment—and not only in the Soviet Union. The United States administration is making every effort to avoid this key problem, to subsume it in talk of other issues.

You are aware of my views in this regard: the attitude of a country to the cessation of nuclear testing is the touchstone of its policy in the field of disarmament and international security—and, indeed, in safeguarding peace in general.

Arguments to the effect that nuclear testing is needed to ensure reliability of nuclear arsenals are untenable. Today there are other methods to ensure this, without nuclear explosions. After all, the United States does not test devices with yields in excess of 150–200 kilotons, although 70 per cent of the U.S. nuclear arsenal—and in our case the percentage is not smaller—consists of weapons with yields exceeding that threshold.

Modern science combined with a political willingness to agree to any adequate verification measures, including on-site inspections, ensure effective verification of the absence of nuclear explosions. So here too there is room for mutually acceptable solutions.

I have addressed specifically three questions which, in my opinion are of greatest importance. [...]

But in almost a year since Geneva there has been no movement on these issues. Upon reflection and after having given thought to your last letter I have come to the conclusion that the negotiations need a major impetus; otherwise they would continue to mark time while creating only the appearance of preparations for our meeting on American soil.

They will lead nowhere unless you and I intervene personally. [...]

That is why an idea has come to my mind to suggest to you, Mr. President, that, in the very near future and setting aside all other matters, we have a quick one-on-one meeting, let us say in Iceland or in London, may be just for one day, to engage in a strictly confidential, private and frank discussion (possibly with only our foreign ministers present). The discussion—which would not be a detailed one, for its purpose and significance would be to demonstrate political will—would result in instructions to our respective agencies to draft agreements on two or three very specific questions, which you and I could sign during my visit to the United States.

I look forward to your early reply.

Respectfully,

M. GORBACHEV

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 24: Meeting in the Secretariat Room with Members of the Politburo and Assistants

September 22, 1986

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze reports to Gorbachev and members of the Politburo on his talks in Washington and informs the Soviet leadership about Reagan's decision to accept Gorbachev's invitation to meet in Reykjavik on the condition that 25 Soviet dissidents, including Yuri Orlov and Nicholas Daniloff, both accused of spying, are released. Gorbachev accepts the conditions and sets forth his main ideas for the summit. The Soviet position, he declares, should be based on an acknowledgment of U.S. security interests, otherwise negotiations would be unproductive. It is clear the Soviet leader is aiming at a serious improvement in U.S.-USSR relations.

Shevardnadze informed the participants about his meeting with Reagan in Washington. Shultz said on September 20 that Reagan agreed to a meeting in Reykjavik if the [Nicholas] Daniloff issue was resolved and if there was a positive response to the list [of names of dissidents] with [Andrei Sakharov] at the top of the list.

Gorbachev: If we succeed in pulling off Reykjavik—that would be very useful...⁷⁶ And for the United States of America, too. They will get Daniloff. As for the list, we accepted the list with 25 people, which was sent to us from the UN. On Daniloff-Sakharov, we should stand firm, so as not to lose face. Let [Yuri] Orlov go in a month. As far as the “25” are concerned, we will respond, but when and who exactly will be on that list is another matter.

Let's announce that we will not be purchasing any more grain. [Anatoly] Dobrynin is trying to convince us that only the United States will benefit from the summit in Reykjavik. But bear in mind—if they are not interested, nothing, of course, will come out of this meeting. Nobody can accuse us of lacking a constructive approach. Therefore, we should not agree to more than Daniloff and Orlov in one month. The people will not understand us. We also have our limits. We have to turn on some propaganda in connection with this pressure on us. For example, [let's hold] a press conference about the 150 “bugs” that we pulled out of our new Embassy building in Washington. And maybe we should make a statement regarding the “25” right away. We should create a leak about Reykjavik: let's say it became known that the Soviet Union was showing some initiative, that there were rumors about it in Moscow circles, and so on. Let our

⁷⁶ Ellipses in the original Russian text. [Editors]

prominent journalists vent. Let them say what they think. Let them develop these ideas. Don't we have some brains?

Look—Kondrashov, Ovchinnikov, Bovin, Borovik—why can't scientists, academics come forth with their own opinion regarding nuclear weapons, the arms race? Why don't they publish their wishes for the Soviet government? This is what democracy is. And at the same time, these will be the trial steps before we make our decision. In that case, we will have greater freedom to maneuver. We will know the responses to our particular ideas beforehand. We should not be afraid.

I am convinced—we can speak about it now—the U.S. governing circles do not want to allow a relaxation of tensions, a slowing down of the arms race. This is most important for them now—to prevent us from developing our plans, increasing the dynamism of our system, and strengthening our democracy. We are only in the process of declaring our new policy, and it has already made a great impression on the outside world. And if we start implementing it now, the results will come.... This is what scares the Americans and inspires them to try to undermine our plans. To sow mistrust by means of the arms race, including [mistrust] among our population, a disillusionment in our policy. Therefore, comrades, nobody is going to come to our aid.

In short, we must make a firm judgment about their policy. And our efforts to summon them for one more summit are also a demonstration of our new policy. The draft response to Reagan that [Anatoly] Kovalev sent to me in the South is no good at all. It does not correspond with our goal of making progress in our contacts with the U.S. That is why I did not approve that draft. I made our response more dramatic, and named specific issues that I would be ready to bring to a summit with Reagan. Whether Reagan will agree to them or not is another matter. But we cannot make offers to the Americans that we know beforehand they will not accept. This is not a policy.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive*. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

Document No. 25: Memorandum from Shultz to the President:
“Reykjavik”

October 2, 1986

This briefing memo from Shultz to Reagan, labeled “Super Sensitive” in addition to being formally classified as “Secret/Sensitive,” shows that Washington did not expect to reach any final agreements at Reykjavik, but, rather, aimed mainly at preparing the ground for a future summit in the United States. Shultz talks about placing ceilings on ballistic missiles but fails to anticipate Gorbachev’s dramatic proposals for 50 percent cuts and a process leading to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Ironically, Shultz says one of the U.S. goals is to emphasize progress “without permitting the impression that Reykjavik itself was a Summit,” whereas history now sees Reykjavik as in many ways the most dramatic summit of the Cold War.

I take the liberty of sending you these views because my schedule keeps me here at the UN and unable to meet with you this week when you are shaping your decisions about Reykjavik.

We should take a positive, self-confident and commanding approach to this meeting. The American people are all for it so we should not seem to be playing it down or disparaging its chances for solid progress. Similarly, we need not take a narrow-minded approach to low-key social events or courtesies to the Soviets when we are there.

We should not try to separate form from content or appearance from substance. As far as Reykjavik goes, they will be intertwined. To take charge of this event and manage it visibly and effectively, we need to:

- engage in serious and visible *preparations* that show we have a unified U.S. team as well as close allied consultation and support;
- aim to produce *substantive progress* (but no agreements per se) at Reykjavik that will enhance the chances for a successful summit in the U.S. We will work across the full agenda, but the reality is that our work will not be seen as effective without some progress on two big issues: arms control and human rights. Gorbachev must go home with a clear sense that Moscow’s continuing insensitivity to the humanitarian dimension of the relationship will assume greater significance as prospects open up in areas of mutual concern;
- and *after Reykjavik* shape a program of public statements and consultations that indicate Reykjavik was useful, but without telegraphing our detailed plans for a substantive success at Summit II in the U.S.

I. PREPARATIONS

We should identify our key players *now*, and include the full range of players from every involved agency. We will be working with this large group all through the week ahead and making it known publicly that the entire team is involved. As for Reykjavik itself, either of two options will work: either take the entire group, on the understanding that the heart of the event will be one-on-one meetings and that only I, perhaps joined by John and Don, will attend other meetings with you—or leave all but the immediate substantive staff in Washington. The reality of the hotel situation in Iceland may make the decision for us, compelling us to travel with the smallest group possible (my list is attached).

As for the allies, I suggest that I or, alternatively, a team headed by Paul Nitze, meet the NAC Foreign Ministers in Brussels early Friday and report to you in Reykjavik mid-day Friday.

II. SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS

Arms control will be key not because that is what the Soviets want, but because we have brought them to the point where they are largely talking from our script. This doesn't mean we will find Gorbachev easy to handle in Reykjavik, but it means we are justified in aspiring to accomplish something useful there.

We have a strong new START position on the table in Geneva. Your July proposal on defense and space is the most detailed initiative in the field the Soviets say is most significant. We are nearly down to the short strokes on INF. There have been experts meetings over the summer on nuclear and space issues, nuclear testing, chemical weapons, and risk reduction. I have just conducted a comprehensive review of all these with Shevardnadze. There is no issue on which we are not well prepared.

I think we can realistically try to accomplish the following in Reykjavik:

- Get the focus for priority attention back on START, where we seek a ceiling on ballistic missile warheads and subceilings which can form the heart of a strategic arms reduction agreement;
- Give Gorbachev a direct and authoritative description of your July proposal on strategic defenses, and of how it responds to the concerns he expressed in Geneva;
- Settle most of the remaining issues on INF;
- Convince Gorbachev of the wisdom of our step-by-step approach to nuclear testing, in which we would first work out the verification provisions necessary to ratify the Threshold Test Ban Treaty, and then negotiate further restrictions on the number of nuclear tests in parallel with further reductions in nuclear forces.

We should also be prepared for a Gorbachev blast at your May 27 decision—and a probe on development of a mutual interim restraint decision, in part owing to his desire to avoid being embarrassed by our exceeding SALT II limits shortly before or after his U.S. visit.

If the discussions go well, you could propose a package of basic elements for agreements on START, INF and defense and space which our Geneva delegations could begin to put in shape immediately after Reykjavik. Formal agreement on such a package could be the centerpiece of a Gorbachev visit to the United States, permitting delegations in Geneva to work on Treaty texts for signature at a 1987 Moscow summit.

III. AFTER REYKJAVIK

Assuming we will impose a press blackout during the meetings, the media pressure will be intense as we emerge. If we achieve something in the arms control field at Reykjavik, we will need to hew to a forceful and confident line with close coordination on the question of how much substance to reveal. We will need to mention general areas where the potential for substantive progress was enhanced, but without permitting the impression that Reykjavik itself was a Summit or raising false expectations for Summit II in the U.S. The theme should be that we are fully prepared for real progress and that Reykjavik contributed considerably to the potential of Summit II.

Following the two days' sessions with Gorbachev, I would stop again in Brussels on my way back to Washington on Monday the 13th. Assuming you will make a public statement or hold a press conference in Reykjavik, and return to Washington on Sunday evening, John and Don might offer to do some congressional briefings early Monday. As Monday is Yom Kippur, you might want to hold off calling in the Congressional leadership until Tuesday. I would, of course, be ready to be sent by you to the Hill as soon as possible after my return late Monday.

The way to bring this kind of a result out of Reykjavik is to pull together a unified team under your leadership. I will gladly serve as your straw boss in this effort. Over the past year we have advanced positions with great skill and confidence. As the results of our negotiations in the field and your strong stance at home, the Soviets have come to us in many areas.

The policies you set in motion six years ago have put us in the strong position we are in today. Your handling of the events of the past month have demonstrated anew we are prepared to be tough when principles are involved, but are capable of creative negotiations in pursuit of long term goals. We are now entering the crucial phase in the effort to achieve real reductions in nuclear forces—an historic achievement in itself, and a major step toward your vision of a safer world for the future.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA 9303778 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 26: Gorbachev's Instructions to the Reykjavik Preparation Group

October 4, 1986

In the lead-up to Reykjavik, Gorbachev explains his top priorities and specific proposals to the group charged with preparing for the summit. He calls for preparing a position with "breakthrough potential," which would take into account U.S. interests and put strategic weapons, not issues of nuclear testing, at the forefront. Gorbachev's ultimate goal for Reykjavik—which he reiterates several times during the meeting—is the total elimination of nuclear weapons based on the Soviets' Program of Liquidation of Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2000, announced on January 15, 1986. Whereas Gorbachev sees the value in making concessions in hopes of achieving a breakthrough, his Politburo colleagues (including KGB chief Chebrikov) warn him against using this word in the negotiations.

We must find an approach that would allow us to pull Reagan into the conversation, so he would agree on directives for the negotiators. It seems we could achieve something, although most likely nothing can really be done with this administration. Europe, the world community, and the [U.S.] Congress are putting pressure on Reagan. [Pierre Elliot] Trudeau [Canadian prime minister] warns us that we will not be able to come to an agreement with Reagan, who is a product of certain forces, and who has been appointed and sponsored by them. But, he says, you are doing the right thing and have already reached the ears of the [U.S.] Congress.

In order to move Reagan, we have to give him something. Something with pressure and breakthrough potential has to be done. We have to decide for ourselves what is realistic, in what ways the USA is bluffing and what they are ready to do, what we can get out of them right now. To do this we must come back to our strongest moves in recent months.

If we fail, then we can say, look, here's what we were prepared to do! We must place strategic weapons, not nuclear testing, as the top priority of our push-and-breakthrough position. Strategic weapons concern everybody more than all other issues. And we must emphasize that we are proposing the liquidation of nuclear weapons, which we already discussed with the President in Geneva. The talks must be devoted precisely to this goal. We should link this position with my January 15th statement.

Our proposals are: to reduce every type of nuclear weapon by 50 percent in the first stage. There is something that the Americans do not like about this. They are holding on to 30 percent and so far are not linking this to anything else. We have to secure our agreements in such a way that the negotiators would receive

directives to balance the different structures of weapons and other details. We should not link this position with space [issues].

About intermediate-range missiles: we got pulled into [discussion] of possible options on this issue. But we have a strong position here: to remove all intermediate-range missiles from Europe. I repeat, this is a strong position. Everyone understands that 100 missiles are enough to [blow up] all of Europe and a large part of the Soviet Union. The pivotal idea in the course of all talks must be: are we planning to go to war?! We, the Soviet Union, are not planning to go to war. That is why we are acting like this. Your optimal American position is not optimal for me, Gorbachev, so to say. I am for having no missiles at all, although we are not touching France and England for now. We can begin the talks on nuclear artillery tomorrow, if you like.

I repeat, the leitmotif is the liquidation of nuclear weapons, and the political approach prevails here, not the arithmetical one.

We must bring out the ABM issue and link it with the ban on nuclear testing. How do we approach this? Start with the fact that up until now orders to resume talks on a full testing ban have not been issued. Are the Americans going to join the moratorium or not? We will not raise this question for now, as well as the question whether we ourselves will resume [testing]. Because if we sit down at the negotiating table with the goal of reaching an agreement within two years, why would Congress assign money for this? But if the testing has stopped and we do not pull out of the ABM Treaty (beyond laboratory experiments), it will be a blow to SDI and to the prospects of space weapons development in general.

Take a look at what can be achieved as a result of such an approach. [The Americans] will seize [the issue of] strategic weapons, but might not meet us halfway on the ABM issues. But if they agree not to pull out of ABM, then the talks will have some potential.

If we start from the assumption that someone is planning to wage a nuclear war, then it is a whole different matter. We surely are not planning on it. If someone wants to conquer the world, then let us discuss everything precisely from those positions. Then everything we said about politics can only be discarded. As far as parity is concerned, given the differences in the types of weapons, it is a technical military issue.

In Summary:

1. Preparation of a [draft] agreement based on the maximum program. My ultimate goal is the liquidation of nuclear weapons.
2. Complete liquidation of INF in Europe, with the understanding that we will conduct separate negotiations concerning the missiles in Asia.
3. To prepare an agreement on the ban on nuclear testing with the goal of making it impossible to put nuclear weapons in space. Not to get involved in the discussion of "thresholds." The whole world is in favor of banning nuclear weapons, [so] coming out with a halfway proposal would mean

that we are retreating. By doing that we would only instigate further modernization of nuclear weapons.

The format of negotiating directives. They must be prepared for the General Secretary, not for Comrade Karpov.⁷⁷ If Reagan does not meet us halfway, we will tell the whole world about this. That's the plan.

We should not arouse big hopes for Reykjavik in the press, but for ourselves first and foremost keep in mind the task of knocking the Pershing II's out of Europe. It is a gun pressed to our temple.

Chebrikov. Our main approach is political.... The Americans' aim is to push us toward interim solutions. I would not use the term "concession." We are looking for ways to reach agreements, but instead we should look for ways to mount a broad political attack on the US administration. There is a huge distance from Reykjavik to a real agreement. Therefore, now might not be the time to get involved in arguments over numbers: 1600 missiles, etc. Right now is not the time to do arithmetic.

And one more important detail: ICBMs have the longest range; the Americans know their location. The second part of the triad is aviation. It is also targeted on airfields. It is more complicated with submarines. But the INF are mobile [weapons]. And the Americans do not know for sure where they are located at any particular moment.

Gorbachev. How do you explain that they are pressuring us particularly about ICBMs?

Chebrikov. I am not saying that we must hold on to the INF no matter what. But we must keep in mind that we would be left without weapons that are not targeted. Also, why don't they stop testing? Perhaps they invented some new type of weapon? We also need to search for our own thing, rather than make scrap metal. We cannot do that without testing.

Gorbachev. What about methods of rapid deployment?

Zaikov. I cannot imagine that after January 1st the USSR would resume testing. I cannot imagine it. The world will not understand us.

Gorbachev. As far as the SDI is concerned, I will tell Reagan in Reykjavik that our response will be effective and not from the direction they would expect. I will look him straight in the eye as I say this. If you do not meet us halfway, well, then my conscience will be clean. Now I have to explain to my people and to the whole world why nothing worked out between us. I deeply regret that we wasted time.

Our position will be the following: if there is no agreement about directives for negotiations, there will be no Gorbachev visit to the States. This is a hook on which we can hold Reagan.

⁷⁷ A Foreign Ministry representative who led the Soviet delegation at the Geneva talks on strategic weapons. [Editors]

By solving these problems, we will not weaken our security, but rather strengthen it.... if, of course, we achieve what we have agreed on here. It would strengthen our security significantly. But all of us—myself, the Politburo, and the MFA—must understand that nothing will come out of it if our proposals lead to a weakening of US security. The Americans will never agree to it. Thus, the principle is as follows: increased security for all along the way to an equal reduction of armaments levels. We will remove the intermediate-range missiles, which serve as a political dictate for Western Europe, and at the same time we will create a better situation in the military sphere.

Our goal is to prevent the next round in the arms race. If we do not do this, the threat posed against us will only grow. And if we do not compromise on some questions, even very important ones, we will lose the main point: we will be pulled into an arms race beyond our power, and we will lose this race, for we are presently at the limit of our capabilities. This is especially so because we can expect Japan and the FRG to join the American potential very soon. That is why it is most important to prevent a new round of the arms race. This is the criterion right now for developing stable and equitable solutions. If a new round begins, the pressure on our economy will be inconceivable. That is why avoiding a new round in the arms race is the most important task for us. I have read everything available on the SDI. We should concentrate all our resources on the development of our own anti-SDI [system], [we should] give people material incentives. We must not allow US superiority on this issue. So far, from what I have read up until now, and from what was reported to me, I see that we can reach a result with fewer expenditures. If the Americans do not accept an agreement, then we will tell them that we will be looking for a move which they do not expect. Prepare the position as I have explained it to you, as materials for conversation with Reagan. Prepare draft directives for the ministries on possible outcomes of Reykjavik, and also [draft] positions on all other questions: regional, chemical weapons, and human rights.

Chebrikov, Zaikov, Kovalev, Chernyaev, Akhromeyev were present.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive*. Translated by Anna Melyakova and Svetlana Savranskaya.]

Document No. 27: Notes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session

October 8, 1986

At the final Politburo session before the delegation departs for Reykjavik, Gorbachev goes over the last details of the Soviet proposals. He allows for the possibility that the meeting could be a failure, but stresses the importance of promoting “positive dynamics.” In that vein he suggests making “concessions on intermediate-range missiles” as well as on French and British nuclear weapons. Gorbachev believes there should be no “intermediate” positions or agreements, driving for his maximum program even if concessions have to be made. Shevardnadze sounds the most optimistic note among the leadership, predicting that the U.S. side could agree with the Soviet non-withdrawal period on the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and on 50 percent reductions in the nuclear triad (missiles, bombers, submarines) and in intermediate-range missiles.

Gorbachev. The right [wing politicians] are concerned about Reykjavik, they are intimidating Reagan. Once again we hear appeals to expand the borders of freedom, once again they are speaking of “a crusade,” threatening to send socialism to the scrap heap of history. Reagan is working on placating the right for his agreement to go to Reykjavik.

From all of this, it follows that the meeting will be very difficult. We should not exclude the possibility of failure. But Reagan understands (and information from [Pierre Elliot] Trudeau confirms this) that the line of action suggested to him by the hard-liners is not acceptable for the world. He sees a way out for himself in holding a meeting for the sake of a meeting.

It is important for us that the whole world is pressing for positive dynamics in international development. And we are the bearers of these positive dynamics, we support the forces of realism. It is not clear to the administration what will come out of Reykjavik, what will happen there. But the majority in America is inclined to think that nothing will happen. Nevertheless, we have no intention of getting into arguments.

We will aid forces represented by [Hans-Dietrich] Genscher, for example, with whom we recently met.

Let us make concessions on intermediate-range missiles, having France and England in mind. But we will insist on non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the cessation of testing—this is what the whole world demands. No “intermediate” approaches will satisfy us.

On human rights our starting position is the following: not to feel shy about showing what is happening in America: unemployment, poverty, lack of personal safety and property safety, drug problems, etc.; and in what direction America is

pushing the world with such values. We should call things by their proper names. What you do at home is your business, but if you want to impose your ways on everybody—then it is dangerous. Let's unload all this at the end of the press conference.

Gromyko. We cannot reverse our position 180 degrees. But only talking about parity in armaments also won't work. In America, they have not admitted the existence of equality and parity for a long time now.

[He] acknowledged that the deployment of SS-20 was a gross error in our European policy.

Ryzhkov. Our biggest plus is that we made Reagan come to the summit. And he is counting on such an outcome of Reykjavik that would help him save face politically.

Gorbachev. People around the world are inclined to demand a constructive outcome. Reagan needs this as a matter of personal ambition, in order to go down in history as a "peace president." Elections are just around the corner.

Ryzhkov. Even if our proposals are not accepted, we will have to seek solutions through negotiations. All three of our positions [on the strategic "triad"] are based on the January 15th Statement.

Gorbachev. Still, we have a defensive position on human rights. We talk more about what is going on here, but instead we should press on what they have there. And we should continue with an assertive spirit. And, of course, we need a serious analysis of the whole situation—our own, and everywhere in the world—to have an understanding of human rights.

Ligachev. Neither we nor America can carry the burden of an arms race any longer. The situation now, a year after Geneva, is more favorable to begin disarmament [considering] Stockholm, the non-aligned movement conference in Harare, the IAEA conference.

If we do not succeed with Reagan in Reykjavik, perhaps we should agree to the option of partial reductions. Would this be acceptable or not?

It is right to link strategic weapons with negotiations about testing and the ABM.

All the same, I think if nothing comes of Reykjavik, we should not abandon the dialogue or [Gorbachev's] visit to the U.S. And of course, it will be very important to explain everything to the whole world at the press conference afterwards.

Chebrikov. A moratorium on testing....⁷⁸ We agree on observing it for a year. But the U.S. needs two years just to calculate the results of the explosions they are conducting now. So they will gladly agree to it.

Shevardnadze. On conventional arms the majority of Europeans support us....

⁷⁸ Ellipses throughout this document are in the original Russian text. [Editors]

Gorbachev. Our military speaks about difficulties which would arise if we reduce or remove the INF missiles. They begrudge it! However, they support the Politburo's position.

Shevardnadze. I would not exclude the possibility of a positive result in Reykjavik, because there is very strong pressure on the U.S.:

- On the ABM, they might agree to the dates;
- On the “triad,” to cut by 50 percent, they might agree;
- On the intermediate range missiles.... Our weak point here is the Asian missiles. We must think through all the options.

An acute domestic struggle is going on in the West and in the U.S. This is why the statements are contradictory.

Therefore we can expect the most unexpected steps. However, any results will become major political capital for us.

Karpov. Why are we against a global option on the intermediate range missiles? Do we want a “double decision” for NATO and Asia? There are no American missiles there, only airplanes for now.

Gorbachev. Can we agree to 100 intermediate range missiles in the East? The U.S. has only 10 intermediate range missiles there, although they have aircraft carriers, air bases, etc.

...Reykjavik will allow us to improve the image of our foreign policy. It will highlight its constructivism, our desire to untie knots, to end the deadlock that Geneva brought us into. Something needs to be done on this central direction after all. It needs to be pushed forward. The United States has an interest in keeping the negotiations machine running idle while the arms race overburdens our economy. That is why we need a breakthrough; we need the process to start moving.

...The Americans need this meeting, otherwise they would not have agreed to it. Reykjavik's timing was well chosen for many reasons. These are the alternatives we are facing: either we achieve practical results, or we expose the absence of practical policy in this administration.

They are probably not ready for the first option, but we have them on a hook with our visit to the U.S.

Our strategic goals are:

1. To remove the “Pershings” from Europe. They are a serious threat to us. This is also politically beneficial in our relationship with Western Europe.
2. Following this is the “zero option” for Europe. If we leave 100 missiles [aimed at] Europe it will not be the same, absolutely not the same!

So for Asia we can push for 100, but for Europe—zero!

The most important task is to prevent a new round in the arms race. Otherwise [we will have] modernization of strategic weapons.

“Tridents,” “Minutemen”... taking weapons into outer space. Then [we will face] a degradation of our ecological, strategic, and political security—a loss on all fronts, because first and foremost it will lead to a wearing-out of our economy. This is impermissible. That is why it is impermissible to cling to particulars, to details, to fail to see the bigger picture behind the details, to confuse one’s own head with arguments over details.

If they impose a second round of the arms race on us, we will lose! For now we have some criteria: SALT I, SALT II.... Because of the submarine which just sank, everybody knows, everybody saw what shape we are in.

And then, inevitably, we will start to panic—“hurry, hurry up! We are falling behind!” The cost of the decisions we make today is extremely high for our country.

We must seek guarantees of our security in two directions:

1. The quality of weapons and their penetrating ability. We should not rely on quantity. We could multiply the number of missiles and warheads a hundredfold, but it will be pointless! The power of the warhead is not what matters, but rather having 99 percent hit accuracy, especially since 1 percent of the weapons we already have is enough to destroy the world. We already have something to bring up to the proper quality level.
2. Our reply to the SDI. There are two options—one is cheaper, and one uses a different method than the American version.

Therefore, we must not calculate our security through arithmetic. And we cannot give up our positions. We can take very brave, decisive steps. As a last resort, we could do more work on the intermediate range missiles in Asia. We must have a backup plan: after the main conversations with Reagan to suddenly offer him Asia as well....

Our positions are honest, even before the Americans.

PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

1. Where should we conduct the concluding press conference, considering the time difference? I think there [in Reykjavik]! The Americans are afraid of publicity in these matters.
2. About informing the socialist countries. Where? I think in Warsaw at the foreign ministries level.
3. The date of my visit to the U.S.?
4. We must not end the press conference on a pessimistic note, so we do not give the impression that we went there for nothing. We should address Reagan, saying: think it over, consider everything. We will be patient.
5. About grain deliveries. Weave this into the context of the meeting.
6. About human rights. We need some “acceleration” here too, to put an end to the routine and take this problem off the Central Committee’s shoulders,

and to get our departments moving. Let the Ministry of Interior look into it, what do they have there.... Open the way back to the USSR for thousands of emigrants. Get the return flow in motion—there are already some who have returned. Receive them at Gromyko's or Shevardnadze's. We need to be more upbeat about these things, more upbeat!

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2, Opis 2. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 28: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, First Meeting, Reykjavik,
10:40 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

October 11, 1986

The opening session of the Reykjavik summit reveals the two sides' very different expectations. The Americans have come to Iceland just hoping for another Geneva-style boost for Reagan's approval ratings (he is about to lose the U.S. Senate to the Democrats in the November elections). As White House spokesman Larry Speakes comments, "The mere fact that the two leaders were meeting ... was enough of an accomplishment." Reagan tells Gorbachev the meeting is just a "boot camp" preparing for the main event, a Washington summit. But Gorbachev has been frustrated at the lack of progress since Geneva, as spy controversies and polemics have gotten in the way of his arms race in reverse, and at the presence of "50–100 variants swimming around in the air" in arms control negotiations. So the Soviet side has come loaded with proposals and concessions. As the head of the U.S. arms control agency, Ken Adelman, later wrote in his memoir, "we came with nothing to offer and had offered nothing; we merely sat there while the Soviets unwrapped their gifts."⁷⁹

The first session was one-on-one (with interpreters and notetakers) at the scenic waterfront Hofdi House. In this preamble, Reagan offers his Hollywood vision—"here we are, the two of us, sitting together in a room, and we may resolve the question of whether there will be peace or war in the world." Soon the two foreign ministers, Shultz and Shevardnadze, join in, and Gorbachev rolls out the details of the Soviet package. These include 50 percent cuts in strategic offensive weapons, including Soviet heavy missiles, while leaving out intermediate missiles and nuclear weapons at U.S. forward bases; the zero option for intermediate missiles in Europe excluding the French and British nuclear forces; a 10-year period for non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty while keeping testing of SDI limited to labs or ground-based systems; a ban on anti-satellite systems; and negotiations towards a total nuclear test ban. Reagan responds sharply on the ABM issue arguing that a successful missile defense system would enable nuclear abolition. The American president also backtracks from his own zero-option idea for intermediate-range missiles, and instead proposes keeping 100 each in Europe, and replacing the ABM Treaty altogether. Gorbachev forcefully counters: wait, here we accept your zero option and now you retract it; we say strengthen the ABM Treaty, and you say destroy it. Reagan says no, we will not build SDI until offensive weapons are reduced, and you get to see the SDI tests and share it. This would become the core argument of Reykjavik, and the shoal on which nuclear abolition would founder.

⁷⁹ Adelman quoted in FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 360.

THE FIRST TALK

(Initially one-on-one)—morning of 11 October, 1986

After exchanging greetings, R. Reagan and M. Gorbachev agree on the order of conducting the meeting.

[Reagan] I have been impatiently awaiting this meeting. In the organizational plan, it would evidently be expedient to devote part of the time to talks held one-on-one, and part of the time—to the exchange of opinions in the presence of the ministers of foreign affairs. Is this procedure acceptable to you?

[Gorbachev] Yes, I agree with this. As a matter of fact, that is what we had in mind when we proposed the meeting.

[Reagan] With what problems shall we begin our discussion? It seems to me that we have an entire series of problems which were left without adequate discussion at our meeting in Geneva, as well as questions which have arisen since that time. I am referring to the problem of intermediate range weapons, space, and agreements on ABM [anti-ballistic missile] defense, as well as proposals on strategic weapons which were discussed by our delegations at the talks in Geneva. I am proceeding from the fact that both our sides have expressed the desire to rid the world of ballistic missiles and of nuclear missiles in general. The world is impatiently awaiting an answer from us on the question of whether it is possible to realize this desire.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, I believe that it would make sense to first conduct a brief exchange of opinions on the situation in the world which has prompted us to appeal to you with the proposal of an urgent meeting, and then I would like to present to you the specific ideas with which we have come to this meeting. I believe that it would be beneficial to invite E.A. Shevardnadze and G. Shultz to that part of our discussion when I will present the specific proposals. Obviously, we will be ready to discuss all questions which the American side feels necessary to raise.

What you have said in regard to the topics of the discussion coincides with our feelings about what questions are expedient to discuss at a personal meeting of the leaders. I can assure you that we have much to say on the problematics of arms limitation and disarmament. At our subsequent meetings, as I understood from the speech you gave prior to your departure for Reykjavik, we will also touch upon other questions—regional, humanitarian, and bilateral, which are the subject of concern for both your country and ours.

[Reagan] I would like to add that, in my opinion, we really will have to talk about human rights. Unlike other questions which we have cited, this problem will not be the subject of official agreements between us. However, it has a great influence on how far we can go in cooperation with the Soviet Union in view of our public opinion. I already told you in Geneva, and I will repeat now, that human rights, and specifically questions of exit from the Soviet Union, are ever present in appeals to me. And if we are unable to resolve these problems in a

satisfactory manner, then this will also affect other questions in the sense that the community will not give the American government credit for implementing possible agreements, if we do not convince the Soviet side to agree to an easing of its position on human rights.

[Gorbachev] We will still talk about human rights. But now I would like to express in principle form our general impression of what has happened in the world since the meeting in Geneva, what problems are the subject of concern of the Soviet Union and the USA. It is useful to compare our evaluations on this matter, and then to go on to specific problems of arms control and disarmament, including strategic arms, medium-range missiles, the ABM Treaty and the cessation of nuclear testing. On these questions I will speak out specifically, as we had agreed, in the presence of E.A. Shevardnadze and G. Schultz [sic].

[Reagan] Yes, I agree with your approach. I raised the topic of human rights only to remind you of those explanations which I gave on this topic in Geneva. We do not want to intervene in the domestic functions of your government. However, we believe it is important that you know the force of public opinion in the USA. We are a nation of immigrants. One out of every eight Americans has some relation with your country and your people. Just yesterday I received a letter from one of the senators, whose mother is Russian. I understand the force of the national spiritual tie, since I, as an Irishman, feel these ties myself, in this case with Ireland. Therefore, I see that all Americans are concerned about what is going on in that country which is bound to them with these ties. And it will be easier for us to conclude agreements on various questions under conditions when our public opinion is not aroused and is not angered by some events in the country of their cultural heritage. However, I agree that these problems become secondary in importance as compared with the problems of nuclear arms. They have worldwide significance, and the entire world awaits their decision from us.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, in the spirit of our coordinated approach to the question of how to organize our meeting, I would like to make you aware of the evaluations given by the Soviet leadership, and by me personally, of the importance of the meeting in Reykjavik in connection with the situation in the world and the status of Soviet-American relations. Much is being said these days throughout the world about our meeting, and the most varied, even opposing, judgements [sic] are being expressed. But now, when we are sitting at this table and our meeting has begun, I am even more firmly convinced of the fact that the decision to hold it was a responsible step by both sides. First of all, our direct discussion signifies that Soviet-American dialogue continues. Although it is proceeding with difficulty, not as our peoples and the entire world would like, nevertheless it is continuing. And this in itself already justifies the trip to Reykjavik. Some people—and there are quite a few of them—believe that the Reykjavik meetings are associated with certain personal ambitions of the participants. I am in categorical disagreement with this and refute it. The meeting is a testimony to our responsibility to the respective peoples of our countries and the entire world.

After all, much in the world really does depend on our two countries, and on the quality of relations between them and their leaders.

[Reagan] I have already told you that I believe our situation to be unique. Here we are, the two of us, sitting together in a room, and we may resolve the question of whether there will be peace or war in the world. We both want peace, but how to achieve it, how to strengthen trust and reduce mutual suspicion between our two peoples!

[Gorbachev] That was my second thought, and I would like to develop it, supporting in principle what you have said. After Geneva, we put a complex and expansive mechanism of Soviet-American dialogue into motion. In this time, the mechanism of our dialogue has been disrupted several times, it has suffered many bumps and bruises, but on the whole it is moving ahead, and the movement is taking on force. This is a positive result. However, on the main questions which concern both sides—how to eliminate the nuclear threat, how to utilize the beneficial impulse of Geneva, how to reach specific agreements—there is no movement, and this concerns us somewhat. Many words have been said regarding these problems. They have been discussed in detail and are being discussed at the negotiations on YaKV [editor's note: reference is made here to the Soviet-American talks in Geneva on nuclear-space arms]. However, these talks have practically come to a standstill. How can we give a different evaluation when at these talks there are 50–100 variants swimming around in the air, and we cannot see one or two which would really ensure the progress of the negotiations? Therefore, we have come to the conclusion that we need an urgent meeting with you, so as to give a strong impulse to this process and allow us to reach agreements which could be concluded during our next meeting in the USA.

[Reagan] I think exactly the same. As has been explained to me, there is an entire series of proposals on the negotiating table in Geneva. There was a proposal to limit nuclear missiles by 50 percent, to a limit of 4,500 warheads. For you this turned out to be too low a threshold, and you proposed parameters of 6,400–6,800 warheads. For us this figure was too high, since it allows a threat of destruction to the entire world. We proposed an intermediate solution, a middle figure between these two indicators, i.e., 5,500 nuclear weapons, keeping in mind the fact that our goal remains the total elimination of strategic nuclear missiles.

[Gorbachev] I would like to make clear to you and to the U.S. government the thought that we want such solutions to the problem of arms limitation and are approaching our proposals which I will present today in such a way that the reduction in nuclear arms would consider to an equal degree the interests of both the USA and the Soviet Union. If in our proposals we considered only our own interests, and thereby gave reason to suspect that we were seeking roundabout means of attaining military supremacy, this would not stimulate the American side to seek agreement, and could not be the basis of agreement. Therefore, I would like to precisely, firmly and clearly announce that we are in favor of such a solution to the problem which would ultimately provide for complete liquidation of nuclear weapons and would ensure equality and equal security of the USA and the Soviet

Union at all stages of movement toward this goal. Any other approach would be unintelligible, unrealistic, and inadmissible. We would hope that the USA would act in the same way.

[Reagan] We have exactly the same feelings. A difficult question here is verification and control over the fulfillment of the assumed responsibilities for arms reduction. There is a Russian proverb to this effect: Trust, but verify. At our previous talks, we expressed optimism regarding the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. I am referring to the total elimination of this class of weapons. The participants in the negotiations cite a number of other questions where progress is possible, specifically strategic arms. Yet in all these questions we need verification and control over fulfillment of the agreed-upon responsibilities. If we are able to achieve this, then the entire world will welcome such an outcome.

[Gorbachev] I will not object here. We have a clear position in favor of effective control over fulfillment of disarmament agreements. Today, when we have supposedly come to that stage when the process of developing specific agreements may begin, it is rather important for us to ensure effective and reliable control within the framework of such agreement. If we do not have this, then I do not think that we will be able to ensure tranquility and a peaceful situation for our peoples. We are ready to go together with you as far in questions of control as our confidence in fulfillment of responsibilities under the agreements will permit. I am prepared to speak out more specifically later, when we invite our ministers. But now I would like to say a few words about the future meeting in the USA. We view Reykjavik as a step along the path to this meeting.

[Reagan] Our meeting has been called a "base camp" on the way to Washington.

[Gorbachev] Yes, and they added that it was located halfway. After all, Reykjavik is located almost exactly halfway between Moscow and Washington.

[Reagan] When I agreed to your proposal regarding the meeting, I did not measure the geographical distance. It just seemed to me that London was not quite a suitable place for a meeting of the format and character which you proposed. It is too large a city, with too many distractions, but here we can discuss everything calmly. By the way, can we talk about the date of your visit to Washington? Are you going to give your suggestions, or should I name a date?

[Gorbachev] I will complete my thought. I have already spoken publicly and indicated in correspondence with you that both our countries must be interested in the effectiveness of my visit to the USA. We agree that this meeting must lead to tangible achievements on cardinal important problems of limiting the arms race which worry the Americans, the Soviet people, and other peoples. You and I cannot allow the upcoming meeting to fail in this sense. It would be a very serious blow. People would begin to ask what kind of politicians these are who meet with each other, pronounce many words, talk for hours, hold one, two, three meetings, and still cannot agree on anything. This would be a scandalous outcome, with consequences which would be difficult to predict. It would evoke

disappointment throughout the entire world. The meeting in Reykjavik, we are convinced, must create the prerequisites for the fact that during my visit to the USA we will be able to work out and sign agreements on problems of arms limitation. This would give it a significant result. But for this we must compare our points of view on these problems today and tomorrow, outline the means of their resolution, coordinate the assignments given to our ministers of foreign affairs and other representatives, and define the volume of work, and already with consideration of all this determine when it would be most expedient to conduct my visit to the USA.

[Reagan] One other problem which I have not mentioned. If we come to an agreement regarding the number of strategic missiles, then we will have to agree at the same time on their maximal throw-weight. After all, it would hardly make sense to establish some limit on the number of missiles and open the possibility for the parties to have only heavy missiles within the framework of this limit. This would not reduce the destructive force of nuclear missiles, and we do not agree to this. We must, within the framework of an intermediate decision, agree also on the throw-weight, obviously keeping in mind the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

[Gorbachev] I will answer that question for you. But now, if you do not object, we will invite Mr. Schultz [sic] and E. A. Shevardnadze.

The discussion was further continued in the presence of the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Secretary of State.

Reagan briefly informs his [sic] both ministers about the content of the discussion which had been held, and gives the floor to M. S. Gorbachev.

[Gorbachev] I will begin the presentation of our proposals.

Our parties are in agreement that the principle question of international policy of the two countries is the recognition of complete elimination of nuclear weapons as our mutual goal. This is logically tied with our agreement in Geneva regarding the fact that nuclear war is inadmissible and impossible.

How do we understand the movement toward this goal? Our approach was presented in my announcement of 15 January 1986. Your side also made corresponding official announcements. I would like to confirm our point of view regarding the fact that we should move toward this goal in stages, ensuring at each stage equal security for both sides. We expect that the USA will act in the same manner. Such an approach is once again organically tied with our agreement in Geneva regarding the fact that not one of the parties should strive to achieve military supremacy over the other.

I will present our proposals on **strategic offensive arms**. Both we and the USA have presented proposals on a 50 percent reduction of SOA. We spoke of this also at the meeting in Geneva. However, since that time, many variants have passed across the negotiation table. I would like to confirm now that the Soviet leadership is interested specifically in deep, 50 percent, reductions in SOA—and no less. The year which has elapsed since Geneva has convinced us of the fact that the world awaits from the USSR and the USA not merely insignificant, but

specifically deep reductions in SOA. We are proposing now, as opposed to our previous proposal of a 50 percent reduction in arms which can reach each other's territory, to agree on the reduction only of SOA. We are leaving aside intermediate range missiles and U.S. forward basing means. Here we consider the point of view of the USA, and are making a great concession to it. Since strategic arms comprise the basis of the nuclear arsenals of both sides, we believe that their reduction must be performed with the constant retention of equality or parity. We are proceeding from the fact that both the USSR and the USA will agree with the fact that the reductions must consider the historically formulated peculiarities in the structure of the nuclear forces of each of the parties.

With 50 percent reductions, we are ready to take into account the concerns of the USA regarding heavy missiles and also intend to significantly reduce our weapons of this type. I emphasize—significantly, and not cosmetically. However, we also expect that the USA will also show similar attention toward the concerns of the USSR. I will illustrate this with the following example. The USA has 6,500 nuclear warheads on submarines deployed throughout the world, which present a great problem in terms of verification and control. Of these, 800 are warheads with MRV (multiple reentry vehicles). We also know the accuracy of the American missiles, both ground- and submarine-based. We hope that the USA will meet the Soviet Union halfway on this point.

Medium-range missiles [IRBM]. We have spoken much about them, much is being said about them throughout the world, and various predictions are being made. The Soviet leadership has once again analyzed this problem from all sides. We have considered the situation in Western Europe, the opinion of the governments and the community of these countries, and decided that we must approach this problem from the broadest positions, naturally considering both our interests, the interests of our allies, and the interests of the USA. Based on this, we propose the complete elimination of USSR and USA missiles of this class in Europe. We are agreeing to a great concession—withdrawing the question of the nuclear forces of England and France. I think you understand what a great new step we are now taking: After all, the nuclear potentials of these countries continue to grow quantitatively and qualitatively. Yet we are ready to seek a compromise solution and are even agreeing to considerable risk for this sake. We would hope that the USA, acting in the spirit of compromise, would agree to make some concessions to us, and considering the major concession which we have made, would withdraw the question of the Soviet medium-range missiles in Asia, or would at least agree to begin talks on nuclear arms—Soviet and American—in Asia.

Within the framework of this problem, we are ready to resolve the question also of missiles with a range of less than 1,000 km. We are ready to freeze their numbers and to begin negotiations on these missiles.

This is how our proposals on nuclear arms appear. We would hope that the American leadership will duly evaluate our broad compromise approach.

The third question consists of the **problems of ABM defense and banning of nuclear testing**. I believe that for us the assurance of preserving a timeless ABM

Treaty, the clearly designated term for non-exercizing [sic] the right of withdrawal from the treaty, would have the goal of strengthening the conditions of the ABM Treaty as a foundation on which we could resolve the problems of nuclear disarmament as a whole. Here we propose coming to an agreement on a compromise basis. We are adopting the American approach, which provides for the basic term of non-exercizing [sic] the right of withdrawal from the treaty and the term of conducting negotiations, and are proposing to define the joint term of full and strict adherence to all points of the ABM Treaty. Here it is important to ensure mutual understanding of the fact that developments and testing in the sphere of SDI would be allowed within the confines of laboratories, with prohibition of outside-of-laboratory testing of means intended for space-based destruction of objects in space and on Earth. Obviously, this would not entail a prohibition on testing permitted under the ABM Treaty, i.e., testing of stationery ground-based systems and their components.

In regard to the term of non-exercising the right to withdraw from the treaty, different figures were quoted by both sides. We are proposing as a compromise variant a rather long time—10 years and no less, and then we would have, say, 3–5 years to decide what to do further on this problem.

One other aspect. Logically stemming from the need for preserving the ABM Treaty which has been acknowledged [sic] by both sides is also the need to prohibit anti-satellite means. After all, it is clear to you and to us that if this were not done, then in the course of creating anti-satellite means it would be possible also to develop anti-missile weapons. Therefore, it is prudent to reach mutually acceptable agreements on the prohibition of anti-satellite means and to cut off this channel.

On the problem of nuclear testing. We have pondered this question at length and from all sides. Perhaps in some degree it is understandable that until the parties agree to broad measures for reducing the strategic potential, their nuclear weapons, one of the sides might still have doubts as to the expediency of total cessation of nuclear testing. However, today in the context of the proposals which I have presented, such doubts must be cast aside. Therefore, it is expedient to agree on the full and final prohibition of nuclear testing. As we know, we have had negotiations on this question. We propose to renew them on a bilateral or trilateral (with the participation of Great Britain) basis. Obviously, as long as the negotiations are going on, the parties may act at their discretion. But in the course of the negotiations, as we understand, questions of control, of reducing [sic] the energy yield thresholds of the blasts, of reducing their number, and of the agreements of 1974 and 1976 could be reviewed. The start of negotiations on the total and general prohibition of nuclear testing would create good prerequisites for the rapid development of an agreement on strategic arms.

This, Mr. President, is the packet of our proposals on all the basic aspects of reducing nuclear weapons. I propose that you and I, here in Reykjavik, give directives to our appropriate departments—the ministries of foreign affairs and others—for the joint development of agreements which we could coordinate and sign during my visit to Washington.

In this context, I would like to emphasize once again that the Soviet Union is interested in the effective and reliable control over measures for disarmament, and is ready to implement it by any means needed, and by means of on-site inspections. We are awaiting such an approach also from the United States.

I have spoken here of some very serious things, and in order to avoid any ambiguity, I would like to give you an English translation of the standard text of what I have said.

[Reagan] We are very encouraged by what you have presented here. Of course, I also noted certain divergences in our positions as concerns strategic and intermediate-range missiles. For example, in our position, reaching the zero point on intermediate-range missiles in Europe also requires the reduction of Soviet missiles in Asia, which may be aimed at Europe under conditions when the USA no longer has any means of deterrence there. Such a situation is not suitable to us. We propose the reduction of Soviet missiles in Asia, or instead of zero—the reduction of Soviet and American missiles in Europe to 100 units, so that the USA would still have a means of deterrence. On strategic arms, we want to attain reduction of this class of weapons to zero. And here I would like to draw a line to the ABM Treaty. As I already said in Geneva, we viewed SDI as an idea having significance only under conditions of liquidation of strategic weapons. Therefore, we are proposing to you, at the same time as reduction in the number of these arms, to sign an agreement which would replace the ABM Treaty. This agreement would provide for both sides to conduct research in the sphere of defensive arms within the framework of laboratory testing permitted by the ABM Treaty. However, when either of the sides approaches the limits, going outside the framework of the ABM, then the tests could be conducted in the presence of the other party. If, for example, we were the first to reach this boundary, then we would invite you to observe the testing of such systems. And if the tests showed the possibility and practical expediency of creating a defensive system, then this agreement would obligate us to share this system with the other side. In exchange, the parties would promise to fully liquidate strategic arms, and within a period of 2–3 years would agree in the course of negotiations on such a system of mutual use of such systems. The reason for such an approach consists of the fact that each of the sides will retain the capacity for production of offensive weapons: After all, we had it before, and we need a guarantee that no one will create it anew, whether this be either of our two sides or some maniac like Hitler, who will want to create offensive weapons. We will need a defense against this. And we propose to protect ourselves once and for all against the rebirth of strategic [sic] arms in the world, and on this basis to build our future for many years.

[Gorbachev] Let me react briefly to your comments. First of all, we view your statements as being preliminary. I have just presented entirely new proposals, and they have not yet been discussed at any negotiations. Therefore, I ask you to give them proper attention and to express your reaction later. Secondly, what you have said is on the same level and in the same plane as what the American participants in the negotiations in Geneva say. We value the efforts of experts on the detailed

development of questions, but they have not moved matters ahead. We need a new input, a new impulse. We want to create it with our proposals. But how is the American side acting? We are proposing to accept the American “zero” in Europe and to sit down at the negotiating table on Asia within the framework of the medium-range missile problem, while you are retreating from your former position. We do not understand this. In regard to ABM defense. We are proposing to retain and strengthen this fundamentally important agreement, while you propose rejecting it and destroying the mechanism which creates the basis for strategic stability. We do not understand this. About SDI. You need not worry. We have gotten to the bottom of this question, and if the USA creates a three-level system of ABM defense, we will find an answer. We are not concerned by this, but rather by the fact that SDI would mean a transfer of the arms race to a new environment, its elevation to a new stage, the creation of new types of weapons which would destabilize the strategic situation in the world. If that is the goal of the USA, then we can still understand its position. But if it wants stronger security for its people and for the entire world, then its position contradicts that goal and is directly dangerous.

Concluding my reaction to your comments, I would like to express the hope that you, Mr. President, will carefully review our proposals and give an answer, point by point, on what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and what disturbs you.

[Reagan] We will continue our discussion of these questions in the second half of the day. For now I will make only one comment. If we were to propose studies in the sphere of strategic defensive systems under conditions where we would reject the reduction of offensive weapons, we could be accused of creating a cover for a first strike. But our position is not such. We propose the rejection of offensive strategic systems. The agreement which I have proposed would prohibit us from expanding a strategic defensive system until we reduced offensive arms. This system would be our protection and yours in case of unforeseen situations, a sort of gas mask. After all, when the use of chemical weapons was prohibited after World War I, we did not reject gas masks. They were the guarantee of our protection against such a weapon in case someone decided to use it. And the methods of creating such a weapon are known. It is exactly the same with offensive strategic weapons. We need a gas mask here. But we can discuss this in more detail at the next meeting.

[Gorbachev] Alright. We will continue the discussion in the same complement.

[Source: FBIS-USR-93-061, 17 May 1993. Transcript of Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Reykjavik. 93WC0065A Moscow MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZH-DUNARODNYYE OTNOSHENIYA in Russian No 4, Apr 93 pp 79–86.]

Document No. 29: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Second Meeting, Reykjavik,
3:30 p.m. – 5:40 p.m.

October 11, 1986

The second session of the Reykjavik summit comes after a luncheon recess in which Shultz kibitzes with veteran negotiator Paul Nitze. The two agree that Gorbachev has just presented the “best Soviet proposal in 25 years,” the grand bargain they have wanted, with huge reductions in the Soviet arsenal in return for slight delays on SDI.⁸⁰ But the afternoon session would expose the lack of flexibility on the American side on the main issue troubling the Soviets—their fear of space weapons as a first-strike tool, which leads to their insistence on preserving the ABM Treaty. Reagan begins the afternoon by essentially reading from a seven-page single-spaced paper placing the focus back on reducing ballistic missiles instead of all strategic offensive weapons. This ostensibly humanistic approach (bombers and cruise missiles were slower, and gave more time for crisis management) does not appeal to the Soviets, whose arsenal was primarily ICBMs, but Reagan keeps insisting, wrongly, that the ballistic missile focus was Gorbachev’s idea. Reagan’s points restate the proposal he made in a July 25 letter for a seven-and-a-half-year period of retaining the ABM Treaty, after which the U.S. could deploy SDI. Gorbachev’s answer begins once again with the simple idea of 50 percent reductions in all strategic offensive weapons, not just missiles, to which Reagan reacts: but “you have more of everything now, and you will have more left with a reduction by half.” The Soviets may have a quantitative edge, but certainly not a qualitative one, so a 50 percent cut would reduce the Soviet core much more than the U.S. nucleus, which is why Shultz intervenes at this point to say: “this proposal is an interesting one, a bold one.”

Reagan, meanwhile, raises the idea of kicking the discussion into the experts’ working group. But Gorbachev wants the leaders, not the negotiators, to jump-start some breakthroughs, saying, “Let’s not slurp the soup that Karpov and Kampelman have been cooking for all these years.” A back-and-forth discussion ensues on intermediate-range missiles, with Reagan finally saying yes, if a solution can be found for Asia where Soviet missiles are deployed, then they could agree on zero for Europe, not counting the French and British. But on ABM, Reagan with great seriousness informs Gorbachev, “we propose writing it into the treaty that we will share with you the defensive weapons we are able to create.” This sets off the most extraordinary exchange, in which Gorbachev interjects: “Excuse me, Mr. President, but I do not take your idea of sharing SDI seriously. You don’t want to share even petroleum equipment, automatic machine tools or equipment for dairies, while sharing SDI would be a second American revolution.” Reagan responds, “If I thought that SDI could not be shared, I would have rejected it myself.” Reagan proposes, and Gorbachev agrees, to put the issues to the working groups even if it takes them through the night.

⁸⁰ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 358.

[Text] *E. A. Shevardnadze and G. Shultz were present at the session.*⁸¹

[Reagan] This morning you handed over a document for our examination, which I have been able to look over. We would now like to have you look over our document, which ends in several proposals.

As I listened to you this morning I had to agree that arms reduction is a matter of the highest priority, and that the time for real action has come. I welcome the fact that the main attention in what you said was concentrated on ballistic missiles, and I recognize that reducing ballistic missile warheads is the central objective.

We have agreed on the matter of reducing ballistic missiles with the idea of a 50 percent reduction. The level of ballistic missile warheads we propose—4,500 units—is approximately half of your present level. Your proposal foresaw a reduction to 6,400-6,800 units. We felt that this figure is too high. Nonetheless, we are prepared to discuss smaller reductions as well. But let me repeat that we prefer a 50 percent reduction, as you yourself proposed this morning.

We are troubled by heavy ICBMs, and we are satisfied that you are offering significant reductions of these missiles. In response, we are ready to make the corresponding reductions of all ballistic missiles, including SLBMs, as you said earlier. In addition to this, we believe that there should be a reduction of throw-weight, establishment of additional sublevels and effective verification.

From our point of view, agreement should lead to a twofold reduction in throw-weight in comparison with your present level. As far as verification is concerned, we feel that it satisfies the interests of both sides, and we believe that progress reached in this connection in matters such as intermediate-range weapons and some others should be reflected in the area of strategic arms reduction.

Within the framework of the overall package, we are also ready to come to agreement on some other issues. In particular we are ready to accept a limit on air-launched cruise missiles, but not any other bomber armaments. We are ready to limit air-launched cruise missiles by including them within the overall limit of 6,000 units of warheads on ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles which, however, would not include freefall bombs and SREMs.

We are ready to accept establishment of a ceiling for bombers. It must be said that these are slow-flying systems, which can be confronted by unlimited air defenses, and which therefore cannot be equated to missiles and warheads, as was done in former arms control agreements. However, we can accept establishment of an overall limit of 350 units for the number of bombers, which will serve as a ceiling on the quantity of bomber armaments.

As far as the overall limit on the quantity of bombers and ballistic missiles is concerned, we can agree with your proposal that this limit should be 1,600 units,

⁸¹ The editors of this volume have removed some of the FBIS Editor's notes from the text, and made minor spelling corrections.

including ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers. If we reach agreement on this, then such agreement must not be made a hostage to progress in other directions.

As far as your proposal on intermediate-range missiles is concerned, I am disappointed with it. In your September letter you wrote that although some problems remain in this area, the positions of the sides have apparently come closer together, you also wrote that a mutually acceptable formula could be found in regard to the matter of Soviet missiles in Asia, and that you are ready to propose such a formula, if there will in fact be certainty that a preparedness to resolve the European issue exists. Now it seems that you are taking a step backward in comparison with this position.

We emphasize that this issue must be resolved on a global basis. And as it seemed to me, you and I had the mutual understanding that we will reach an interim, global agreement, which will include equal ceilings both in Europe and in the global aspect in regard to Soviet and American warheads on intermediate-range missiles. There must be no doubts as to the fact that we are insisting on a global solution. We can agree with your idea of a reduction to 100 warheads in Europe, if a satisfactory solution is found in regard to other elements. Let me repeat that we will be happy with 100 warheads in Europe if other aspects are resolved satisfactorily in the interim agreement.

The issue of verification is highly important. You said in your letter that verification is no longer a problem, from which I conclude that you are ready to participate constructively in a search for solutions that would eliminate our concerns in the area of verification.

I would like to remind you once again that you said that you have a formula for missiles in Asia. This formula has to go farther than what you offered in Vladivostok, and today as well. We cannot agree on a decision that would only freeze the level of SS-20s in Asia. We favor a proportionate reduction in Asia. Given a reduction to a level of 100 warheads in Europe, a proportionate reduction in Asia would produce a figure of 63 units. However, a reduction to 100 units in Europe and 100 in Asia would also be acceptable to us, but only in the appropriate context. The issue of lower-range systems would have to be resolved, it cannot be tabled. As a minimum, these systems must be limited to a level not exceeding the present quantity of Soviet lesser range missiles. In this case the United States would have the right to the same quantity of missiles, and the lower the level, the better.

This is precisely what you proposed in your draft treaty on intermediate-range systems. This is why we are somewhat troubled by your reluctance to limit lower-range missiles at this stage. However, I welcome the fact that this morning you touched upon the issue of these missiles, and announced a readiness to freeze their number.

I have to say that I will not accept an agreement that would include a ban on our Pershing-2 missiles. The only thing that can be discussed is the composition of missiles on our side—that is, the quantity of Pershing-2 missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles. We cannot agree to having ballistic missiles in your forces and none in ours.

We feel that the interim treaty must remain in effect until it is superseded by another agreement. This proposal was contained in our 15 May draft of the treaty, and we support it.

So let's agree to have 100 units each in Europe and Asia, and then we will be making some headway. We will not insist on proportionate reductions in Asia to a level of 60–65 units, we will agree on a level of 100 warheads outside of Europe and on freezing lesser-range systems in Europe at the present level, and then you and I will have a basis for an agreement.

I think that you and I can agree to instruct our diplomats to coordinate on the matter of limiting lesser-range missiles within the framework of an interim agreement, with regard for their combat capabilities and the need that the agreement must foresee equality between the USSR and the USA.

Let's also reach agreement regarding verification measures. We believe that these measures should include comprehensive and punctual exchange of data both before the reductions and after they are carried out, on-site observation of the destruction of missiles being reduced to the agreed level, and effective observation of the remaining arsenals and corresponding structures, which would include on-site inspection.

Finally let's put the issue of the treaty's period of effectiveness to rest. We can instruct our diplomats to develop an agreement on this issue under which Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles would continue to be limited by the regime of a legally binding treaty, until such time that the sides reach agreement on further reductions.

As far as your concern regarding SDI is concerned, I did take it into account in my July letter. First of all I noted that we recognize that the term of the ABM Treaty is indefinite. I proposed a mechanism by which we could move toward a regime based on high reliance upon defense. My proposal does not mean eliminating the ABM Treaty. New provisions that would replace some provisions of the ABM Treaty would be developed as the result of the negotiations I propose. Implementation of my proposal would reinforce strategic stability and ease the burden both of our countries are bearing in having to constantly modernize and enlarge strategic offensive arsenals. My proposal foresees a meticulously verifiable transition, possible under stable conditions, to a new balance of offensive and defensive weapons, and later on, to elimination of offensive ballistic missiles.

The apprehensions you voice fall into two categories.

First, you are concerned that defense could be used for offense. I can assure you that this is not the purpose of SDI. Yes, the concern was voiced that space-based weapons could be used to destroy targets on the ground. But there are no weapons that are more reliable, more effective and faster than ballistic missiles. We already have an agreement prohibiting deployment of mass destruction weapons in space. And if you have any additional concerns in this connection, we can work together to ease them.

Second, you voiced the concern that the United States might obtain a possibility for carrying out a first strike, and then avoid retaliation owing to defense.

I can say that we do not have the capability for carrying out a first strike, and that this is not our goal.

The concern you voiced encouraged me to suggest drawing up a treaty eliminating all offensive ballistic missiles. In this case the question as to the combinations of offensive and defensive systems that would allow one of the sides to make a first strike disappears automatically. I am convinced that owing to this, the situation will become stabler, safer, and that all of this will cost us less. Armaments that reach their target in a few minutes and cannot be recalled would be eliminated, which would put an end to the instability generated by apprehensions regarding a disarming first missile strike. My proposal will make it possible to ensure stability by eliminating ballistic missiles and creating a defense which would provide a guarantee against cheating and the actions of third countries. What we want most of all is to replace ballistic missiles by defense, transition to which would occur in stages, with stability ensured at each stage of the disarmament process.

We are ready to share our accomplishments in strategic defense, and we could include a provision in the treaty which would make the quantity of defensive weapons deployed dependent upon the number of ballistic missiles remaining. Such a situation would be distinguished by high stability, since bombers and cruise missiles are unsuited to a surprise attack, in view of their slow speed and the absence of limits upon air defense systems.

We naturally need to examine the times and stages of transition to strategic defense. The principles of equality and stability would be observed at each stage of this process in this case. My proposal is a serious step, and we need to conduct serious negotiations. I am certain that its implementation will make it possible to place security upon a stronger and stabler foundation. As far as the proposal you made today is concerned, I do not fully understand what topics would be discussed in the negotiations you suggest. Will our proposals be discussed, including our idea of sharing the advantages of strategic defense, and the proposal to eliminate ballistic missiles?

[Gorbachev] I will answer this question later.

[Reagan] Regarding the issue of nuclear testing. We welcome the fact that you recognized the existence of an interrelationship between the need for possessing nuclear weapons and their testing, between the existence of these weapons and testing. I am certain that as a first step we need to improve the verification procedure pertaining to treaties on the initial ban of nuclear testing and on peaceful nuclear explosions. Correcting the shortcomings of these two treaties in matters of verification is a priority to me. If this can be done by means of the "Korrteks"⁸² system, or some other system you might propose that is just as effective, we would be able to ratify these treaties.

⁸² A verification method used to record the parameters of a nuclear explosion with a yield above 50 kt. [Footnote in the FBIS text]

I announced to the Congress that I would be submitting these treaties for ratification, and that this would be a reflection of the importance that I attach to this issue. I will do this when the new Congress convenes for its next session. If we reach agreement on improving verification procedures, I will ask the Senate to ratify these treaties, with the stipulation that ratification will become effective only after I am able to assure the Congress that the treaties yield to effective control. This approach is supported by the congressional leadership, and therefore you should not have any illusions regarding a split on this issue in our country. Therefore let's agree that we will correct the two mentioned treaties. Such agreement will be evidence of progress in the question of nuclear testing. This will be a reasonable and logical ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. I am striving for progress on this issue, but you must understand that the moratorium on testing or a total test ban are excluded in the foreseeable future. Perhaps some common ground could be found on the basis of your ideas and ours.

Regarding centers for reduction of the nuclear danger. I am satisfied with the progress that has been enjoyed in this matter. Let's now take a step toward agreement. Considering the progress that has been attained, I see nothing that can keep us from setting the goal of drafting an agreement on this issue, to be signed during your visit to the USA.

Strict observance of existing agreements is a matter of special importance. I emphasize this time and time again. My decisions regarding the START-1 and START-2 treaties were adopted because of the Soviet Union's failure to comply with these treaties. Construction of a radar station in Krasnoyarsk is especially significant among the violations.

It generally appears to me that rather significant progress is possible. Therefore, I propose that we instruct a group of experts to meet today at 8 o'clock this evening and discuss all of the issues identified by us in the areas of strategic arms, intermediate-range weapons, space and defense, and nuclear testing. Nittse [sic], Kampelman, Perl, Pauni, Linard and Edelman will participate in the group from the American side.

[Gorbachev] Before I respond, Mr. President, at least briefly to your statement and the numerous issues you have touched upon, I would like to ask a few questions for the purposes of clarification. As I understand, you share our goal of reducing strategic offensive missiles by 50 percent.

[Reagan] Yes.

[Gorbachev] At the same time if I understood you correctly, the figures you cited reflect options that were discussed in Geneva and which foresee a 30 percent reduction.

[Reagan] We proposed 6,000 units.

[Shultz] This level would include 4,500 ballistic missile warheads and 1,500 air-launched cruise missiles.

[Gorbachev] Much has already been said about these options, and you know that the matter reached a dead end. Our diplomats in Geneva can go on discussing all of these figures, levels, sublevels and so on forever. I have data here on

American and Soviet strategic arms. I can give this table to you. And what I propose is this: Inasmuch as we agree that strategic missiles should be reduced by 50 percent, let's reduce all forms of armaments in our strategic arsenals by half—ground-launched missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and missiles carried by strategic bombers. Thus the strategic arsenals would be reduced by 50 percent across the entire spectrum. The structure of our strategic arms evolved historically, you see, and with such a reduction, not one form of armament would be wronged, and the level of strategic confrontation would be reduced by 50 percent. This is a simple, proportionate solution, one which everyone will understand. And then all of these debates, which have now been going on for so many years, about levels, sublevels, what counts or doesn't count, and so on, will be resolved automatically, since a 50 percent reduction is a 50 percent reduction. And there will be nothing to debate. Do you agree with such an approach?

[Reagan] But my proposal also includes all strategic weapons except freefall bombs carried by bombers. But even these are limited indirectly, since a limit is set on the number of bombers.

[Gorbachev] These are all particulars on which we can reach agreement. I think that the simple solution I propose accounts for your concern regarding many issues. You are troubled by our SS-18 heavy missiles, and they will be reduced by 50 percent. All strategic arms will be reduced. Otherwise, we will be like our ambassadors Karpov and Kampelman, treading water for years on end, and getting nowhere. But if we agree on a 50 percent reduction, then it will be simpler to resolve all of the other issues, and agreement could also be reached concurrently on bombs. If we see that in the course of such negotiations you are trying to obtain advantages for yourselves in a round-a-bout way, we will tell you so. And if we can meet you half-way in some issues, we will do this as well. But are you happy in general with the proposed approach?

[Reagan] This is something that can be discussed, if you consent to the meeting of experts we propose. I can't say anything definite right now. I don't know all of the figures. But it seems that you will have a certain advantage with a 50 percent reduction, since after all, you have more of everything now, and you will also have more left with a reduction by half.

[Gorbachev] But look at the figures for the total quantity of warheads. And in general, let's not slurp the soup that Karpov and Kampelman have been cooking for all these years. I propose a simple solution.

[Reagan] I see that according to your table we have 518 bombers. But many of them are old bombers, and they are not part of our force composition.

[Shultz] Well, even they will be reduced by half. It seems to me that this proposal is an interesting one, a bold one.

[Gorbachev] Does this mean that you are interested in it?

[Reagan] But do you agree to hold a meeting this evening at the expert level?

[Gorbachev] We'll talk about it.

[Reagan] We have discussed your apprehensions. But I want to remind you of the time when only the USA possessed nuclear weapons. And we offered then to

make them international, to give up our monopoly. We could have dictated our terms to the world at that time, but we did not do that, we did nothing of the kind.

[Gorbachev] The next issue. Do I understand correctly that the U.S. President no longer likes the zero option he proposed regarding medium-range missiles?

[Reagan] No, I like it very much, but only with a global resolution of the issue. If the zero is on a global scale, then this would be fabulous. But if intermediate-range missiles are eliminated only in Europe, while a significant number of missiles aimed, in your words, at Asia will remain on your side, I could not agree to that. Your missiles could reach Europe from there, after all, and in addition, they could be moved suddenly to other places.

[Gorbachev] But you have nuclear weapons in South Korea as well, at bases, aboard forward-based weapon systems, not to mention other nuclear arms. Because you had earlier stated concerns regarding the nuclear arms situation in Europe, we also propose eliminating all medium-range missiles in Europe. As far as weapons systems with a range below 1,000 km are concerned, we propose freezing them and starting negotiations, and as for weapons in Asia, we also propose starting negotiations with the objective of finding a solution pertaining to these missiles in Asia, and consequently a solution to the problem as a whole.

We have already opted to leave aside the strategic arsenals of Great Britain and France, and this is a concession on our side. Nor are we raising the issue of forward-based systems. Why has the United States not taken any steps in return? What we are now proposing, after all, is a simple solution: zero in Europe, and negotiations regarding Asia.

[Shultz] The problem is that...

[Gorbachev] I would like to hear the President's opinion.

[Reagan] As far as I know, we do not have any ballistic missiles in Asia at all. You are talking about sea-based arms. But both you and I have fleets in the Pacific Ocean. And yours is larger.

[Gorbachev] But what about airplanes? What difference is it to us whether we are threatened by a strategic bomber or a medium-radius missile? You have bases in Korea, on the Philippines. But let's discuss everything, let's seek a solution. I am certain that we will be able to find it.

And so we propose eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe, leaving aside the issue of English and French weapons, freezing medium-range weapons and discussing them in negotiations. As far as concerns Asia, where both we and you have concerns, this will become an object of negotiations, and I think that a solution will be found there. Perhaps our experts could discuss this option in the evening?

[Reagan] Good. I emphasized on several occasions in Geneva and other places that there is a difference between bombers, freefall bombs and missiles. Just press a button, and in a few minutes an entire region will be wiped off the face of the Earth. On the other hand an airplane is essentially a conventional form of arms. It is confronted by air defense, and it can be brought down. Nonetheless, as I said earlier when I was talking about bombers, we are moving in your direction when we limit the number of bombers to an equal level for both sides. But let me

repeat once again that airplanes, which are conventional arms, cannot be compared to missiles.

[Gorbachev] But if we eliminate missiles, bombers will continue to fly as before. And they will fly more than before, because there will be no fear of retaliation by missiles.

[Reagan] Therefore it is important not to stop with what we are discussing, but to resolve the issues of conventional arms as well.

You're not the only ones with apprehensions. We also have apprehensions that you would still have missiles, supposedly only for Asia, and we would not have Pershings in Europe. In such a case we would not have the possibility for retaliation. Yes, we would still have bombers, but by the time bombers take off for their targets, you will have already blown up Europe. Is this any kind of retaliation? And this is not to mention your air defenses, interceptors, surface-to-air missiles and so on.

[Gorbachev] Your line has no logic to it. This problem arose in Europe. There are English and French nuclear arsenals in Europe also. We made a concession when we agreed not to consider these extremely sizable arsenals. You can't solve this problem by arithmetic alone.

The matter appears to be much simpler. You went into Europe with your missiles, and you don't want to leave it. If that's so, then say so. As far as our missiles in Asia are concerned, they will not reach Europe. [...]

But what I want to ask you, Mr. President, is this: If a solution is found for Asia, will you agree to the zero option in Europe?

[Reagan] Yes. We stationed them there only at the request of our allies, which my predecessor accepted and which I implemented in response to your SS-20 missiles. As far as your missiles in Asia are concerned, I have seen maps from which it follows that while they can't hit England, they can hit France, West Germany, Central Europe, Greece and Turkey. Plus the fact that they are mobile.

All of this emphasizes everything I discussed back in Geneva. Before we can work things out in regard to armaments, we need to try to clarify the causes of mistrust. If we are able to eliminate it, it will be easier to resolve the problem of armaments.

[Gorbachev] That's true. Which is why I am amazed that you dispute what I told you about our missiles in Asia. They cannot reach Europe. Specialists know this well, and therefore your position seems to be an obvious paradox. This is not to mention the fact that it could be stipulated precisely in an agreement that no missiles will be moved anywhere, and that everything will be subjected to the strictest inspection.

I think that we can instruct our experts to discuss your thoughts and my idea. But do I understand correctly? If a solution is found regarding Asia, will you agree to the zero option in Europe?

[Reagan] Yes.

[Gorbachev] Now about something else. If we begin the process of reducing strategic and medium-range missiles now, how will the leaders of our two

powerful states be able to allow elimination of what is the last obstacle in today's dangerous situation. I am referring to the open-ended ABM Treaty. Can we really go and violate it, rather than strengthening it? If we are going to have reductions, it is very important for both sides to be certain that no one will create weapons during this time that would undermine stability and parity. Therefore the step which both you and I have proposed, though with different timetables in mind, appears totally logical to me—the pledge to continue to observe the ABM Treaty for, as we propose, 10 years while simultaneously making major reductions in nuclear arms. Then this reduction could be carried out with confidence. Otherwise when someone is doing something behind your back during the reductions, a dangerous situation is created.

And so, logic requires that we strengthen the ABM Treaty. In the meantime your SDI will be limited to laboratory research.

And one last thing—my proposal regarding cessation of nuclear testing. I believe that it is a compromise, since it takes in your ideas as well. We propose issuing instructions to begin negotiations that will lead to total prohibition of nuclear testing. It will take a certain amount of time to reach this goal. Therefore in the first stage of the negotiations we could discuss the questions you posed—regarding a yield limit of testing, the number of tests and the fate of the 1974 and 1976 treaties. All of this will also be the object of negotiations. In this case no one will be able to reproach us for deceiving ourselves and the world public and limiting ourselves to cosmetic measures in the matter of reducing tests, which are troubling to all mankind. We will be able to say that we are beginning full-scale negotiations on cessation of these tests, during which we will also examine the issues indicated above. Then it will be clear that movement which will lead to cessation of testing at some stage has begun.

[Reagan] This seems interesting to me. I think that the experts need to discuss this in the evening. Let me return to the ABM Treaty. We are convinced that you violated this treaty by your actions in the area of anti-ballistic missile defense and construction of facilities contrary to the treaty. As far as SDI is concerned, I feel certain that this is the best possibility for ensuring peace in our century. We do not intend to eliminate the ABM Treaty. We propose adding provisions to it having to do with creating specific defensive weapons that both sides will have. We propose writing it into the treaty that we will share with you the defensive weapons we are able to create.

[Gorbachev] Let's agree on this: We will accept your proposal for a meeting of experts at 8 o'clock this evening. Let them discuss today's proposals and the thoughts expressed by the General Secretary and the President. I will instruct our people to find real solutions and serious agreement in all directions, including verification. Now that we are discussing specific stages in nuclear arms reduction, we'll be fighting for verification, something that we need three times more than the USA.

[Reagan] Listen, we are two civilized countries, two civilized peoples. When I was growing up—that was before your time—countries had rules of warfare

directed at protecting the peaceful population. But now that an ABM regime exists, both countries have terrible missiles aimed at each other that can annihilate countless numbers of people, and primarily noncombatants—women, children. And the sole defense against this possibility is the threat that we also are in a position to carry out such mass extermination. This is an uncivilized situation. I propose a system which both countries will have and which will not put anyone in a disadvantageous position, and will make missiles obsolete. Concurrently it will provide a guarantee against the actions of any madman like Qadhafi [sic] who would probably use missiles if he had them. I think that the world will become much more civilized if we, the two great powers, demonstrate this example, create defensive systems and eliminate terrible modern armaments. I think that we would then be able to look proudly into the eye of the entire world.

[Gorbachev] I would prefer to reply in a less philosophical spirit, more on the practical plane, which is dictated by the subject itself of our discussion. Our proposal is this: Let's strengthen the ABM Treaty for the period in which we will be starting reductions of nuclear potentials—strategic and medium-range. We feel that 10 years is the minimum period for strict observance of this treaty. Meeting the USA's position half-way, we are ready to agree with the proposal for laboratory research, which will allow you to see whether you need a full-scale, three-echelon anti-ballistic missile system, or something else. By the way, this corresponds to our possibilities in the practical aspect as well. Before, even you weren't able to do anything, except perhaps for a few components. During this entire time, you and I will still be left with huge nuclear arsenals, ABM resources and so on, and no terrorist or madman will be able to do anything.

As far as SDI is concerned, it is not evoking concern among us today in the military respect. We are not afraid of a three-echelon ABM system. If your laboratory research motivates you to create such a system, considering that obviously America has a great deal of money, our response will be different, asymmetrical. What actually troubles us is that it will be difficult for us to persuade our people and our allies as to the possibilities for beginning reductions of nuclear arms in the absence of the ABM Treaty. There would be no logic in this, and nothing could be built on this basis.

[Reagan] We have absolutely no desire to eliminate the ABM Treaty. This treaty is defensive, but you capitalized on its provisions to create a powerful defensive potential. We did not do this.

In this situation all we can say to the Americans is this: If the other side destroys us, we will destroy it. But people are not sleeping any easier for this. We propose supplementing the ABM Treaty with provisions on specific defensive weapons being created not for a first strike or to obtain advantages. We want this to be available to all the world.

[Gorbachev] We will not deploy SDI. We have another concept.

[Reagan] We do not intend to eliminate the ABM Treaty.

Regarding the 10 years you propose, I can say that judging from the way things are going here, we will not need 10 years to demonstrate something.

I would not have said several years ago that this was possible, but now I think that we will soon be able to demonstrate something.

[Gorbachev] I am taking your statement under advisement.

And so, we agree with your proposal on conducting a meeting of experts this evening.

[Reagan] There are still some regional, bilateral and humanitarian issues to be discussed. We have been so engrossed in the problems of armaments that we did not touch upon these issues, and I think that they can be discussed beneficially. On our side the group will include Ridgeway, Simons, Matlock, Rodman and Perris. If you have people on your side that could take part in such a discussion, the group could meet today as well, since tomorrow is the last day of our meetings, and perhaps they could look at what we can come up with in regard to these issues.

[Gorbachev] Good, I agree. As for who will participate in these groups from our side, I'll tell you later.

[Reagan] A couple of words in conclusion. You said that you don't need SDI, but then we would be able to carry out our programs in parallel, and if you find that you have something a little better, then perhaps you could share it with us.

[Gorbachev] Excuse me, Mr. President, but I do not take your idea of sharing SDI seriously. You don't want to share even petroleum equipment, automatic machine tools or equipment for dairies, while sharing SDI would be a second American revolution. And revolutions do not occur all that often. Let's be realistic and pragmatic. That's more reliable.

[Reagan] If I thought that SDI could not be shared, I would have rejected it myself.

To conclude, I would like to give you lists of several persons. These are humanitarian matters, problems concerned with divided families, and so on.

[Gorbachev] We will examine these lists carefully, like we always do.

[Reagan] I know that.

[Source: *FBIS-USR-93-087*, 12 July 1993. *Transcript of Gorbachev-Reagan Reykjavik Talks*. 93WC0085A Moscow *MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZHDUNARODNYYE OTNOSHENIYA* in Russian No 5, May 93 pp 81–90.]

Document No. 30: Record of Conversation in the Working Group on Military Issues

October 11–12, 1986

In the all-night military expert talks that took place during the middle of the Reykjavik summit, the Soviet delegation led by Chief of the General Staff Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev picks up with the new Soviet program just outlined by Gorbachev in his meeting with Reagan earlier in the day. But the U.S. delegation led by Paul Nitze essentially disregards the new Soviet proposals, negotiating instead on the basis of an earlier U.S. position. Responding to the U.S. idea of allowing development of SDI while proceeding with deep cuts in strategic weapons, Georgy Arbatov comments, “what you are offering calls for an exceptional level of trust.” In the absence of this key ingredient for far-reaching agreement, he concludes flatly, “We cannot accept your position,”

Virtually all the concessions made in the arms control working group would come from the Soviet side. Instead of equal cuts of 50 percent in ICBMs, which would leave the USSR with numerically more than the U.S., the group settles on equal ceilings, which is problematic for the Soviets because their strategic triad relies heavily on ICBMs. After multiple breaks in the discussion and arguments within each delegation, Akhromeyev comes away with an agreement limiting each party to 1,600 launchers and 6,000 warheads. The Soviet side also accedes to the American line on counting bombers, agrees not to count French and British nuclear weapons, and to start negotiations on medium-range missiles immediately on the basis of Washington’s 1981 “zero option” proposal. However, the package assumes U.S. acceptance of a 10-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and adherence to the original interpretation of that treaty, which would severely limit research on SDI. But this is exactly the stumbling block of the entire summit—Reagan’s insistence on SDI without limits.

Nitze: Good evening. I hope that today we will be able to make real progress in the questions we will be discussing. I propose to begin with discussion of strategic offensive weapons and medium-range missiles. Then, I think, we will talk about the issue of nuclear testing, the problem of risk reduction, and finally about the ABM. Does this suit you?

Akhromeyev: If you don’t mind, we would do it this way: we would discuss the issue of strategic weapons, then the medium-range missiles problem. The third question could be the ABM Treaty and banning nuclear testing; and afterwards we could discuss the issue, which you named the problem of risk reduction, in other words—the problem of reducing the danger of a nuclear war outbreak.

Nitze: Very well, let us examine these questions in the order you propose. [...]

Akhromeyev: Today during a talk with the President, the General Secretary proposed reducing strategic weapons by 50 percent; every kind of arms, i.e. ICBMs by 50 percent of the existing level, SLBMs by 50 percent of the existing level, and heavy bombers, carriers as well as warheads and cruise missiles, by 50 percent of the existing level. I would ask you to state your position on this proposal.

Nitze: We do not agree with this proposal. The President said today that a significant difference exists between the ammunition of bombers and cruise missiles, and that until we reach an understanding on this question we will not come to an agreement. As far as I understand, the General Secretary regarded this with understanding.

A proposal was presented to establish a single ceiling for warheads on ICBMs, SLBMs, ammunition on heavy bombers, as well as for carriers. We will have difficulties with this question as well. I propose to discuss the questions on which we have no disagreements, and select the problems on which we have noted divergences for more detailed discussion. [...]

Nitze: We are proposing to create one ceiling of 1600 units for ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. We would be prepared to establish a sublevel, let's say 350 units, for heavy bombers within the general 1600 strategic weapon units level. As you can see, we are proposing substantial reductions of ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. But we do not propose a 50 percent reduction within each of the strategic weapon categories. Perhaps we could discuss the sublevel question in detail right now?

Akhromeyev: A difficulty arises here, and it lies in the fact that the way you said it right now, you still separate heavy bombers from ICBMs and SLBMs. We cannot agree to that. This is a triad, and has been fixed as such at negotiations between the US and USSR. We regard it as one whole, which we call strategic weapons. As a result, when we say that we place a certain limit on the number of carriers, on the number of warheads, it means that all three types of strategic nuclear forces—the ICBMs, the SLBMs, and the heavy bombers—must be included in that number. [...]

Akhromeyev: ...We have stated our position clearly enough. Each side is free to decide how many warheads to have on which carriers. The General Secretary proposed a good option: to reduce the number of presently existing strategic weapons by 50 percent in each type. Such a proposal was presented today.

Nitze: I will advise not to agree with this proposal.

Akhromeyev: Then, as I understand, we are left with this disagreement about the cruise missile level. We think such a level should not be established.

We also think that levels within the framework of ICBMs and SLBMs should not be established. If we determine 6000, then each side should further decide where to have what number of warheads, while taking into consideration the fact that heavy ICBMs would be reduced in substantial numbers. A definitive scale of these reductions could be agreed upon in the course of negotiations. For now, we could note that this scale would be substantial.

Nitze: Allow me to specify one issue. You propose to also establish a total level of 6000 units for warheads on ICBMs, SLBMs, and for cruise missiles on heavy bombers. Within the limit of these 6000 units, each side would determine for itself where to station the warheads and how many cruise missiles to have on the bombers. Did I understand you correctly?

Akhromeyev: You understood our proposal correctly. I would like to say, Mr. Nitze, that we came to work in our group here with the General Secretary's specific instructions to consider our position on reducing each side's strategic nuclear power by 50 percent. The ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers would be reduced by 50 percent, and in this case we would be prepared for a 50 percent reduction in heavy missiles. But, as I understood, the American side does not agree to this. That means everything we have discussed and will discuss in the future, will have to be reported to the General Secretary. It seemed they had basically agreed with the President that today we would consider exactly this proposal.

Nitze: And we are considering this proposal. I am asking questions in order to clearly understand your position. Your proposal of the 6000 level is not acceptable to our side. [...]

Akhromeyev: [W]e can move on to the issue of medium-range missiles.

Nitze: During an earlier discussion of this question with Mr. Karpov in Washington, we agreed on two fundamental points.

The first point: for cruise missiles in Europe, it appears possible to establish a ceiling, which would be above "zero."

The second point: it appears possible to reach an agreement on an equal global level for warheads on medium-range missiles; the Soviet side would have these warheads in the Asian part of the USSR, and the American side—on US territory.

In accordance with our long established position proclaimed in 1981, we, of course, speak in favor of establishing a global "zero" for cruise missiles and medium-range missiles. We support complete liquidation of this type of weapon. But, as I understand, this is not in your plans.

Akhromeyev: What you said about your conversations with Karpov in Washington is a stage of the past. Today, a meeting between the General Secretary and the President took place. At this meeting, the General Secretary presented a proposal for the complete liquidation of Soviet and US medium-range missiles in Europe, not taking into account French and English weapons. You have been involved with this issue for a long time and you know what a concession the Soviet Union is making in this case. As far as we know, the General Secretary stated directly that for the sake of the mutual interest in reaching an agreement on this question, the Soviet Union made a concession. At the same time, we stated our agreement on the existence of a problem with lower medium-range (less than 1000 km) missiles, and the Soviet Union is willing to start negotiations about this issue. It was also stated that we are prepared to start negotiations on the questions of medium-range weapons in the East. As I understand, to this the

President did not respond with full agreement, but it was recorded as a promising proposal, which could be considered and on the basis of which an agreement could be reached. In essence, I have now only repeated what the General Secretary stated at the talks today. This proposal was today brought forward for our discussion.

Nitze: I understand the General Secretary set this forth before the President today. Recalling the history of Soviet-American negotiations on these issues, I would like firstly to understand, on which questions we have reached an agreement, and on which we have not. We must have a clear conception of the final solution to this problem. We know you are prepared to enter into an agreement, not taking into account the weapons of England and France. These questions were also discussed during talks between the Secretary of State and Mr. Shevardnadze. It was then stated that we are prepared to accept a global zero solution on these weapons; however, you spoke against such a solution. We also stated in Washington that we are willing to accept a decision that would leave some number of medium-range weapons for both sides. Mr. Karpov then offered for 100 units would be allowed for each side. We agreed to this under the condition that the same weapons would be accordingly reduced in Asia. We were then discussing a proportionate reduction in Europe and Asia of higher medium-range weapons. Lower medium-range weapons were not discussed in full detail. We believe the main difficulty in reaching a solution to this question lies in determining a number of medium-range weapons in Asia that would be acceptable to both sides. On this issue, we have not heard a concrete number proposal from you, which would presuppose a substantial reduction of medium-range weapons. A solution in which the European zone would be secured at the zero-level option, but you would keep around 500–600 warheads in Asia, is unacceptable to our allies and us. Furthermore, the problem of a correlation agreement for American “Pershing II” missiles and cruise missiles in Europe still exists.

Akhromeyev: Mr. Nitze, today we are authorized to discuss the proposals presented by the General Secretary. What was before him really took place. But that is all in the past. I repeat—today, the General Secretary proposed to liquidate Soviet and American missiles in Europe, without taking into account weapons of England and France. We believe this is such a move forward from the Soviet side that the American side should respond positively. We are starting our negotiations on missiles with a range of less than 1000 km. We could also start negotiations on missiles in the East. We believe that the American side should respond to our move toward your wishes.

Nitze: We would have to respond and we are responding. I can only repeat that we are willing to accept a global zero-level option, but not willing to have a “zero” in Europe while a substantial number of missiles remain in Asia. We insist on a significant reduction of missiles in Asia. We also insist on working out an agreement on limiting missiles with a range of less than 1000 km. As you can see, there is a considerable difference between our positions. [...]

BREAK

Akhromeyev: Mr. Nitze, we would like to find out how your position differs from the proposals your country presented in Geneva in September of this year.

Nitze: I think our position is stated quite precisely.

Akhromeyev: At the talks with the President, the General Secretary put forth proposals for reducing strategic weapons by 50 percent. Moreover, the Soviet Union took down its former proposal for including American medium-range missiles and forward based systems reaching USSR territory in the 50 percent reductions. We consider this a principally new proposal. You respond by repeating your old proposals, which were put forth in September at the Geneva talks. We agreed to substantially reduce the numbers of heavy missiles. In other words, right now we do not consider it possible to work out any kind of joint proposal on strategic weapons.

Nitze: But we supposed that a new formulation would be worked out on the basis of our text.

Akhromeyev: Yes, but that would be called working out an agreement on American terms. The Soviet side will not agree to that.

Nitze: How do you suggest to alter our proposal?

Akhromeyev: This text cannot be altered, because it deals with a different subject and goals. At the meeting with the President yesterday, the General Secretary offered new solutions, which really would reduce the strategic weapons of both sides by 50 percent in all categories and warheads. In your proposal, the reductions under the 50 percent description are far from a 50 percent reduction. If we take the existing level of American strategic carriers (about 2200 units) and reduce it to 1600, a question arises: where is the 50 percent reduction. So a completely different proposal is discussed here, a proposal we are familiar with—one presented by you on September 18 of this year. This proposal cannot be considered as the American side's constructive response to a new and far-reaching official Soviet proposal, which the General Secretary stated to the President yesterday. Therefore it does not seem possible to combine our text with yours, or to add corresponding corrections to your text, in order to put together common guidelines for the Secretary of State and the foreign Minister regarding the agreement for 50 percent strategic weapons.

Kampelman: I have a simple question for you. We began our talks yesterday at 8 p.m. And we are conducting a discussion. As I understand, both sides have been and are discussing the total level of 1600 units. That is why we prepared corresponding proposals, which would lean on this total level. You never named a different total level. If you would like to propose a different level, please, we are listening.

Akhromeyev: I presented a proposal in the beginning of the talks. It was stated yesterday at negotiations. You know it well already. Your proposition did not respond to the proposition put forth by the General Secretary.

Kampelman: Let us discuss the sublevels with which you do not agree. Or propose your sublevels.

Karpov: We clearly proposed to reduce the carriers and warheads by 50 percent from your and our existing levels. Go ahead and count how many carriers you should have left, and accordingly how many warheads on them. You should know these numbers well.

Kampelman: Which numbers exactly do you have it in mind within the 50 percent?

Akhromeyev: If the US has 1018-1020 ICBMs, then 50 percent would be about 510 units. If the USSR has 1398 ICBMs, then this number would be reduced in half. By the way, the General Secretary has given the strategic weapons composition to the President.

Kampelman: If we measure these levels in units, you propose unequal levels for both sides.

Akhromeyev: Absolutely right. We propose 50 percent reductions for both sides.

Nitze: We are not willing to discuss levels that would be different for both sides. As I understand, today we were supposed to come to an agreement on how we intend to reach equal quantitative levels for both sides. That is why we proceeded from the quantitative levels that were named here. [...]

BREAK

Akhromeyev: We reported to our superiors the US position that came into view during today's negotiations, as well as the position we presented. As the result of our report, we specify one question in part pertinent to an agreement we proposed for strategic weapons reduction. It consists of the following: we offer to prepare an agreement for the 50 percent reduction of US and Soviet strategic weapons to an equal number of carriers and warheads for both sides, considering the historically developed features of the strategic powers' structures of both sides. At the same time we state as a matter of fact that the American side did not respond to any of our far-reaching proposals presented yesterday at the talks between the General Secretary and the President, to almost any of the questions discussed (strategic weapons, ABM Treaty, total ban on nuclear testing); rather it repeated the propositions presented earlier in Geneva, or in the correspondence between our leaders, the General Secretary and the President. We had hoped that as the result of our presentation of new proposals, corresponding proposals would come forth from the American side. But this did not happen. This is what I wanted to say.

Nitze: The first part of your new proposal differs to some extent from what we discussed before the break, and we welcome that. Does that mean you are prepared to discuss specific levels for carriers and warheads with regard to cruise missiles? These levels would be around 1600 and 6000 units accordingly.

Akhromeyev: Yes, we are proposing to specify through negotiations an equal number of carriers and warheads for both sides under the 50 percent reduction condition.

Nitze: This is important, because it may enter the text of directive instructions to our foreign ministers.

Akhromeyev: Indeed, if we had acceptable possible agreements on other issues, then it seems we could move forward here as well. But we are offering a zero-level option for medium-range weapons in Europe without taking into account the weapons of England and France, and negotiations on medium-range nuclear weapons in the East, as well as negotiations on missiles with a range of less than 1000 km under the condition of freezing each side's existing levels, but you do not agree to this. As we understood, we have fundamental differences on the ABM Treaty issue. We regard this problem differently, just as the issue of a full ban on nuclear testing. We should here call your attention to our formulation of the very subject of negotiations. We say: on the complete ban on nuclear testing.

Your side proposes to conduct negotiations on nuclear testing. We believe that here the approach is also fundamentally different.

Nitze: Allow us to once again return to the strategic weapons question. Are you willing to specify in our proposals text the 1600 and 6000 unit levels?

Akhromeyev: We believe that this number must be discussed at negotiations in order to be somewhat like this. This is a topic for negotiations. [...]

Akhromeyev: The next question is about the ABM Treaty. You have our corresponding formulations on this question.

Nitze: Here is our proposal for this issue. (He reads the text in English. The text is translated into Russian and handed over to the Russian experts.)

Akhromeyev: We will not be able to agree to this proposal mainly for the following reasons: when considering the strategic weapons reductions question we have absolutely specifically agreed on reducing these weapons by 50 percent, and evidently upon the conclusion of negotiations the ministers will decide on a specific timetable for this reduction. We have always said that in this case we need a provision of reliability of the sides observing the ABM Treaty. For this reason we propose for the US and USSR to reach an agreement on not using the right of withdrawal from this Treaty for 10 years, and during this time to strictly observe its stipulations. This would entail a ban on testing any space-based elements of the ABM in space, except for research and tests conducted in laboratories. We would ask for understanding of our concern and the unbreakable relation of the position I just expressed with the 50 percent strategic weapons reduction.

Nitze: Our formulation takes into account the entire situation and supposes to remove your concern: with the reduction and following liquidation of strategic weapons, the sides will not only discuss questions of strategic defense, but also share new technologies and discoveries in this sphere. In the future a timetable for a joint transition to strategic defense would be discussed. We really intend to remove your concern about this question.

Akhromeyev: We view such a resolution of this question in which the US would share new military technology with us skeptically. You do not want to share even civil industry technologies with us. Therefore we consider your

proposal unrealistic and not much needed. We believe there is no need of creating an ABM above the limits designated in the ABM Treaty. At the same time, we believe it to be necessary to obtain security for ourselves and strengthen the ABM Treaty.

Nitze: But we will be ready to share achievements in new military technologies in the sphere of strategic defense and this position would be coordinated in an amendment to the Treaty.

Akhromeyev: If the testing of nuclear weapons begins, any possibility and likelihood of preventing a space-based arms race will disappear. Because of this we expressed our concern on this issue to the US. We painstakingly offer our proposals on this question.

Nitze: We are exchanging views on this issue and in no way are thrusting our position on you. Regretfully, we have few common points on this question.

Akhromeyev: Your proposals are inequitable and once again are not obligatory in character. On such a basis there will be no agreement. We should not allow the testing of space-based ABM elements in space; the ABM Treaty prohibits this unequivocally.

Arbatov: We have serious disagreements about this question. You are well aware that we will not sign an agreement about substantial reductions in strategic weapons if you develop your ABM in violation of the existing ABM Treaty. You offer to simultaneously reduce strategic weapons and create new strategic defense systems. These two things cannot be synchronized. What you are offering calls for an exceptional level of trust.

We cannot accept your position. [...]

Akhromeyev: [...] Let us move on to the next question on banning nuclear testing. (The sides study texts stating the sides' positions.)

Karpov: I see that something does not suit you in our formulation.

Nitze: No. It is just that our formulation seems more acceptable to us. It proposes step-by-step limitations on conducting nuclear testing.

Karpov: Your proposal is ambiguous.

Nitze: We do not think so.

Karpov: You have neither a subject, nor a goal for the negotiations. We propose a wide spectrum of questions, which—after they are considered—could lead to a full ban on nuclear testing.

Nitze: We link the discussion of nuclear testing to the reduction of strategic weapons.

Akhromeyev: We invite you to follow our example. We believe we are taking the bull by the horns. And we are ready to assume additional responsibilities. We have not conducted nuclear testing in over a year.

We offer to come to an agreement on banning nuclear testing step-by-step. At the first stage we could finally resolve the question of threshold nuclear explosions. The goal would not be legalizing nuclear testing, but banning it. Ideas about the beginning of negotiations and the goals should be clearly formulated in your version of the directives.

Nitze: We clearly proposed to start these negotiations immediately. The subject of negotiations is known—nuclear testing. This would be a step-by-step process.

Akhromeyev: We propose to record: “negotiations on a complete ban of nuclear testing.”

About antimissiles. We propose to record: “the sides agree to undertake mutual efforts with the goal of prohibiting ASAT antimissiles.”

Nitze: We cannot agree to that.

Akhromeyev: We brought closer our positions on strategic weapons quite well, but completely disagreed on the ABM. This makes strategic weapons reductions impossible.

Karpov: The proposals for negotiations on creating nuclear war outbreak risk reduction centers are absolutely clear.

Akhromeyev: These negotiations will go more successfully than others.

Yes, regretfully our work today did not lead to big results. Thank you for your cooperation. Until next time.

Talks were recorded by Colonel Popov, October 20th, 1986.

[*Source: Personal Archive of Georgy M. Kornienko. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 31: Transcript of Reagan–Gorbachev Reykjavik Talks

October 12, 1986

The morning session of Reykjavik's second day includes Shultz and Shevardnadze, as the two leaders review the results (and certain lack thereof) from the all-night working group meeting (see previous document). Gorbachev shifts his position on intermediate-range missiles to one that limits the Soviet side to 100 units in Asia and 100 U.S. warheads aimed at that theater. Reagan in turn accepts the elimination of INF deployments in Europe. But the ABM issue still separates them. At one point, Reagan becomes irate: "damn it, what kind of agreement are you defending?... I do not understand the charm of the ABM Treaty, which in fact signifies guaranteed mutual destruction." Gorbachev insists the ABM Treaty prevents "any attempts to obtain one-sided advantages by deploying space systems." Later he remarks, "it takes two to tango.... Therefore I invite you to a male tango, Mr. President." The session runs 90 minutes late, as Gorbachev and Shevardnadze emphasize that the Soviet offers are a package and insist the Americans offer some assurances on the ABM issue—observance for a period of ten years, at least. When the Americans fail to respond suitably, the Soviets signal their willingness to walk away: "[W]e have had an interesting exchange of opinions, but did not reach a unified opinion.... I do not think the world will stop." Gorbachev finally suggests a break—maybe the ministers can come up with "something"—which leads to an unscheduled afternoon session that focuses on space weapons.

[Text] G. Shultz and E.A. Shevardnadze were present during the conversation.

[Gorbachev] This is our third meeting, Mr. President. Our representatives who took part in the meetings of the two groups on preparation of directives—the group on arms control questions and the group on bilateral issues, regional problems, and humanitarian questions—have reported the results of their work to me. You too have probably received such a report from your representatives. Let's begin with an exchange of opinions. I propose that you begin.

[Reagan] Good. I have a more or less clear picture of how the meeting of the arms control group ended. Concerning the other group, where Ridgeway from our side was presiding, I do not have a complete picture. But I think, let's begin with arms control.

The report of this group, which worked yesterday evening and this night, generally disappointed me, with certain exceptions. But let's take things in order.

On strategic nuclear weapons we can establish a certain degree of agreement, and it is significant. Both sides showed a desire to compromise. In general this is understandable, because this is an area where we have already been working for a long time, have accumulated experience, and know what we are talking about. We agreed to apply the formula of 50-percent reductions across the whole

spectrum of these weapons. This approach can move the talks in Geneva ahead, and both parties can be proud of this.

On intermediate-range nuclear weapons. The parties discussed a number of questions, including missiles of shorter range, the effective period of an agreement, and the problem of monitoring. These questions can be discussed further at the talks in Geneva. The parties were not able to resolve the problem of reducing intermediate-range weapons in Asia, although they discussed it in great detail. As we see, this is not a technical matter. I will remind you that the American side at the very start made a proposal for a global reduction of these weapons to zero, that is, elimination of an entire class of weapons. We continue to think that solving this problem requires a global approach, a global agreement. All this is not news to you, but we cannot ignore the existence of a problem if we want to move ahead toward arms reduction. I cannot permit the creation of a situation where we would reduce these missiles to zero in Europe and not make proportional reductions of similar Soviet missiles in Asia. This is a question of the SS-20 missiles. They are mobile and can be moved easily from one place to another. Their presence exerts an influence on our Asian allies, not to mention our allies in Europe. This is not news to you either. But we cannot disregard the desire of the European and Asian governments to reach a global solution of the problem of intermediate-range missiles. They completely support this position and insist on it in the interests of their own security. In your letter to me you said that a solution to the question of Soviet missiles in Asia could be found if we would reduce or destroy our intermediate-range missiles in Europe. So you also recognize that a solution can be found on a global basis.

If the global, zero-level option does not suit you, we proposed an intermediate agreement which would envision equal limits on these missiles of the USSR and the United States in Europe if we count warheads, and equal limits on a global scale. We are ready to agree to a figure of 100 warheads each for the USSR and the United States in Europe if we can agree on other aspects of the problem, among them proportional reductions of warheads on Soviet missiles in Asia, and the United States would have the right to deploy the same number of warheads in its territory. We can talk about the number, 100 warheads in Asia, or we can talk about a smaller number, for example somewhere around 63, if we figure the proportion of the reduction from the reduction of these missiles in Europe. I am ready to accept the figures 100 in Europe and 100 in Asia and to order the participants of the talks in Geneva to work out the details of the agreement.

[Gorbachev] I want to establish the American position precisely. You agree to 100 Soviet and 100 American warheads on medium-range missiles in Europe, 100 warheads on Soviet IRM's [intermediate-range missiles] in Asia, and the right of the American side to deploy a similar number of warheads in U.S. territory. Do I understand you correctly?

[Reagan] Yes, that is right.

The issue of *space and defensive weapons*. Here we have differences, we recognize that. The sides were not able to reach agreement. I am convinced that

I cannot retreat from the policy I have declared in the field of space and defensive weapons, I simply cannot do it. Therefore, in this we could order the participants in the negotiations to concentrate on three critically important questions. Two of them have to do with the present, while the third relates more to the future. In each of these questions we are ready to consider your concerns, but we expect that you will take ours into account. The first question is, how can we synchronize actions in the area of creating strategic defense while implementing the goal of eliminating ballistic missiles? The second questions [sic] is, what are the conditions and time framework for the transition to a situation where the sides would rely on strategic defense? The third question is, what actions and what mutual understandings could lead to a gradual transition from the ABM Treaty to a new system based on strategic defense? I understand that our positions on these questions are far apart. Therefore, at a minimum we could order additional talks and try to bring the positions closer.

Nuclear testing. I am disappointed with the report of the group working on this question and I only hope that the result[s] reflect a lack of imagination on one or both sides. We agreed yesterday that negotiations should be started without delay. We also agreed on the agenda, procedures, and final goal. The sides could not even agree on how to start these talks. I propose that we present the understanding that we reached and agree to begin talks immediately on questions of nuclear testing. These talks should be coordinated with solving the problem of eliminating nuclear weapons and their final goal should be stopping testing. During the talks such important matters as monitoring, other questions, and existing treaties in this area could be discussed. As for the name of the talks, let each side call them what they like. That is not so important when we have an agreement on the agenda and final goal of the talks. Let's give the appropriate directives.

[Gorbachev] I do not exactly understand what you have in mind.

[Reagan] On this question the sides could not work out a single, acceptable formula. The positions of the sides still differ.

[Gorbachev] Could you state how you see the final goal of talks on this question?

[Reagan] The United States and the USSR begin negotiations on questions of nuclear testing. Their agenda would include all aspects of testing, including the unresolved questions, existing treaties, monitoring, limits on power of explosions, and others. These talks could occur together with stage-by-stage elimination of nuclear weapons and would ultimately lead to stopping nuclear testing.

That is what can be said about the work of the arms control group. In the second group, concerning those questions which I am aware of we have reached understanding, and the desire of the parties to work on thermonuclear synthesis looks especially positive.

[Gorbachev] I can state our preliminary attitude toward the questions posed in all three of the problems you have mentioned, Mr. President. You reviewed the work of the two groups overall, concentrating on the arms control group. I want to briefly recall our approach to these problems. We think that our new proposals

that we brought to Reykjavik are formulated with a substantial constructive element, and not on the philosophical level, but on the real, practical level. We have made major concessions to the United States in the hope that it will be possible to get the arms control talks moving and work seriously on reducing nuclear weapons. It is my impression that the American side is not taking this position of ours into account or, at the least, as we see, carries on the discussion in the same tone as was done in the talks in Geneva. I have already mentioned this, and I will repeat it now: discussion of the problem in negotiations and other contacts between the two sides did not provide a way out of a deadend situation. The Soviet leadership is convinced that the problems must be looked at with a broad view and we must demonstrate political will power and readiness for large-scale decisions to get out of this deadend. We think that our major proposals, which are based on the principle of equal security, are appropriate to this. We expect the same of the United States.

As I see, we can establish the existence of agreement on the problem of strategic nuclear weapons, to the effect that the principle of 50-percent reductions should apply to all components of strategic forces, both platforms and warheads. We took the concerns of the United States into account here.

Regarding intermediate-range missiles we are discussing a sphere in which we have been engaged in negotiation for a long time, and we are going over all the problems that concern the United States, the Soviet Union, and our allies, carefully. It seems to me that we have taken account of all the concerns of the American side in our proposals. What do I have in mind? First, we are setting the English and French nuclear forces aside. Second, we agree to freeze missiles with a range of less than 1,000 kilometers and enter negotiations concerning these missiles. Third, we recognize that a problem of deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the Asian part exists although, strictly speaking, this question does not relate to Europe. But we considered that the American side persistently raises this question and is ready to resolve the question of intermediate-range missiles in Europe in coordination with intermediate-range missiles in Asia. We decided to meet the American side half-way and are ready to sign a document that says we have entered into negotiations on these missiles.

When you listen closely to the American positions you get the impression that the U. S. President and administration are beginning from false premises. You and your people think that we have a greater interest in nuclear disarmament than the United States does, that if you put a little pressure on the Soviet Union it will raise its hands and surrender. That is a dangerous mistake. It is not going to happen. You talk of some kind of intermediate agreement, to which we do not agree. We will not accept palliatives. We want a solution to the problem.

As I understood your position, Mr. President, if we could find a concrete solution to the problem of intermediate-range missiles in Asia—I mean not just a protocol of negotiations but a concrete solution too—you would agree to complete elimination of Soviet and American missiles, to a zero-level solution in Europe. Do I understand you correctly?

[Reagan] That will depend on what figures we adopt for missiles in Asia. They are mobile weapons, it is not hard for you to move them from one place to another. But with the zero-level option the United States would be left without means of deterrence in Europe from such an outcome. You would be left with 100 warheads in Asia, while our missiles would be brought back to the United States. So you would have a 2:1 advantage, no more, an absolute advantage because we would have no deterrent in Europe. You understand that we have friends in Asia and we have friends in Europe. Among them are some countries with whom you are also trying to establish better relations. What is wrong with the idea that no weapons at all would be aimed at these countries?

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, in your reasoning you appear to have forgotten the existence of the English and French nuclear forces, but they exist and can be built up. When we talk about a zero level in Europe, we are in fact talking about a zero level for ourselves, for the Soviet Union. But if you think about it, what kind of zero level would this be for the United States if its allies continue to have nuclear weapons and we eliminate all of ours? Are you aware of the step, the risk which we are taking in order to reach agreement on intermediate-range missiles?

As for the Asian missiles and the possibility of moving them to Europe, I will say frankly, Mr. President, that I actually find it a little awkward to hear that in a conversation on our level. If we reach agreement on intermediate-range missiles, we will be able to ensure a situation so that this understanding is not violated. Our sides have adequate capabilities for inspection and monitoring to establish the fact of a violation. We can include in the text of the treaty that the transfer of just one missile from Asia to Europe would be grounds for abrogation of the treaty. I did not want to say this, but I have to. These are not serious arguments, let's agree not to waste time.

[Reagan] We do not consider the English and French forces a part of NATO. Those forces exist for the defense of those countries, their governments have stated that clearly. It appears that they will not be activated in a case such as an attack on West Germany. Moreover, against these forces you have your own deterrent means in Europe, strategic weapons.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, you say that the English and French missiles are not defending West Germany. Well, who will defend the GDR? And Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria? Who will defend them? That argument does not work. That is the first thing. Second, I remember my talk with M. Thatcher on the question of the English forces, when she tried to convince me of roughly the same idea, that these are forces independent of NATO. I cited her letter sent to the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff where it says that she appreciates the work done by the American side to re-equip and modernize the English forces and thanks you for that. The English do not hide the fact that their forces are integrated into NATO. That is known in the Soviet Union, and it is known to you. We are not at a press conference, but rather in a small group in conversation, Mr. President, and we should not engage in banalities. We know everything about the participation of England and France in NATO and we know which targets these

weapons are aimed at, and by whom. I say this to you so frankly because we are talking about exceptionally serious, important matters.

[Reagan] You and I are the leaders of the two largest nuclear powers in the world. Our nuclear forces are located in all parts of the globe. In comparison with us the forces of the other countries are purely defensive. If you and I come to an agreement to begin reducing and ultimately eliminate nuclear forces, if we stand side by side on this issue and tell the other nuclear powers that they have to eliminate their own nuclear weapons, I do not think that any of them will refuse us.

[Gorbachev] I have the same opinion. I want you to understand that a unique situation has now been created for the American administration. A year ago it was not the case that the Soviet Union had advanced major compromise proposals, and certainly not 2-3 years ago. I simply did not have that capability then. I am not certain that I will still have it in a year or 2-3 years. What will happen if we do not make use of this opportunity? Reykjavik will just be mentioned in passing, nothing more. A shame that all that was missed.

[Reagan] I am in the same position. It is possible that before long I will not have the powers that I do now. Why not use the time that we have and make a contribution to the creation of a world free of the nuclear threat?

[Gorbachev] I believe that now, when I sit opposite you, opposite the President of the United States, I can look you in the eye with a clear conscience. We have brought far-reaching proposals. I ask you to appreciate this. One thing is needed to reach agreement, a desire on your side.

I will repeat myself once more about intermediate-range missiles. We are ready to begin negotiations on missiles in Asia. We are ready for a zero level of Soviet and American weapons in Europe without counting the English and French nuclear forces. We are ready to freeze short-range missiles and begin negotiations on them. We are taking into account all factors, practically all of your positions, including those concerning Asia. We are ready to look for solutions right here.

[Reagan] We have gotten a little carried away. You said that you are ready to reduce missiles in Asia too. I am glad to hear that.

[Gorbachev] I just summarized our position: elimination of all Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles in Europe, disregarding English and French forces, a freeze on and conversation about missiles with range of less than 1,000 kilometers, and a start to negotiations on missiles in Asia. I will even say more. You put forward the formula of 100 warheads on Soviet missiles in the Asian part of the USSR and 100 warheads on U.S. missiles in America. For us this means a several-fold reduction of our missiles. But okay, if the United States is unable to offer us anything else, we agree even with that version. We agree, although we see what the situation is in Asia, what is happening in Japan, and what is happening with your own presence in the Pacific. But we are taking this final step to show that we are serious. In this case will you be ready for a Soviet and American zero level in Europe?

[Reagan] We agree with that.

[Gorbachev] Good. I have been waiting for you to start making concessions to me. On both the first and the second problems I was the one who made the concessions. Now I am testing you on the third question, the question of antimissile defense, and I will see whether the United States intends to move ahead to reach agreement.

So, the ABM Treaty. It can be considered that we have agreed in principle on a 50-percent reduction of Soviet and U.S. strategic nuclear forces. We have agreed to eliminate intermediate-range missiles in Europe, to freeze missiles with range of less than 1,000 kilometers and begin negotiations about them, and to have 100 warheads on missiles in Asia, several-fold less than today, and 100 warheads on intermediate-range missiles in America. These are unprecedented steps from the Soviet side. They demand a very responsible, honest approach in the realization state. They will demand very strict, rigorous controls. I will tell you directly: we will fight harder for controls than the United States does. We are beginning steps of real disarmament. We need control, and we will not agree to reduce strategic arms and intermediate-range missiles without confidence that the other side is fulfilling its obligations strictly.

If we have agreed to work on deep cuts in nuclear weapons, then we must create a situation where there should be no doubt either in fact or in mind that the other side wants to shake up the strategic stability and bypass the understandings. And from this we should have confidence that the open-ended ABM Treaty will be preserved. You, Mr. President, must agree that if we are going to reduce nuclear weapons we have to be confident that the United States is not doing anything behind the back of the USSR, and the USSR is not doing anything behind the back of the United States that would threaten the interests of the other side, degrade the agreement, or create difficulties. It follows that strengthening antimissile defense conditions is a key challenge. We propose to take on the obligation not to use the right of parties to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for 10 years, and during this time to strengthen the ABM Treaty. When we were working up this proposal, we gave special consideration, Mr. President, to your adherence to the idea of the SDI. We are agreeable, when deciding the question of not using the right of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for 10 years, to make a note that laboratory testing in the SDI area will not be prohibited, in other words we do not touch the SDI program within the framework of laboratory experiments. I do not think that this point would greatly limit you. We know what state the corresponding development projects in the United States are in, and we know that in two or three areas you have had some breakthroughs. We know, and we ourselves are doing a few things. So the laboratory phase should not constrain you. But the 10 years of not exercising the right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty are essential to create confidence that, when deciding the problem of arms reduction, we are preserving the security of each side and are not allowing any attempts to obtain one-sided advantages by deploying space systems. In political, practical, and technical terms there is no loss for either side here.

[Reagan] The United States never violated the ABM Treaty. We did not deploy a single antimissile allowed by this treaty. But the Soviet side did more than allowed under the ABM Treaty. As for SDI, when we put forward a program of strategic defense we are pursuing the objective of preserving the peace and achieving disarmament. We propose to conclude the agreement of which I spoke a great deal yesterday for the purpose of helping prevent the restoration of weapons. We are proposing a binding agreement. In our law an international obligation has priority over domestic law, and becomes American law. We will be ready to assume the obligation to share technology with the Soviet Union if SDI research reveals the possibility of building such defensive technology. We think that this will help eliminate nuclear weapons if it moves in parallel with the elimination of these weapons. Understand me, I cannot retreat from my positions, renounce what I promised our people. I am serious about sharing this technology with the Soviet Union. You see, according to our position there is no sense in viewing this technology as a threat. After all, if everyone has it then no one will be able to threaten anyone else. This system is also needed to defend against a threat from a third party or nuclear maniac. Why can't we make this part of the ABM Treaty?

[Shultz] I would like to ask a question. When you, Mr. General Secretary, speak of complete elimination of nuclear weapons, as far as I understand you are tying this to a 10-year period of non-exercise of the right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. In other words, do you think that this 10-year period will be enough for complete elimination of nuclear weapons? If you have in mind such a connection, this timetable even exceeds your plan for strategic arms and intermediate-range forces. Do you think that not a single ballistic missile should be left after 10 years?

[Gorbachev] I confirm that statement made on 15 January 1986. These questions—the 50-percent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons and the question of intermediate-range missiles—relate to the first phase of our program. The next phase envisions further reduction of nuclear weapons with participation of the other nuclear powers. But the first steps, the most important and decisive ones, must be made by the principal nuclear powers in the course of 10 years. We will not retreat from this. But here is what alarms us. If we want to reach agreements—and everyone has an interest in that—then we should be determinedly interested in strengthening the ABM Treaty and consolidating the ABM rules. That is so, of course, if there are no secret intentions. The Soviet Union is in favor of this, while the United States in fact wants to weaken the ABM Treaty and revise it. That does not seem logical to us. The one who proceeds in that way will be accused by the whole world of trying to develop a large-scale antimissile system for its own egotistical purposes. I cannot go before my people with such a position, nor before the whole world. Therefore, we propose to strengthen the ABM Treaty by adding an obligation not to use the right to withdraw from it for 10 years with simultaneous large reductions in nuclear weapons. If we are talking of the permissibility of SDI research in a laboratory setting, we are going to meet

half-way the President who bound himself with the corresponding obligation before his people and before the world. We are giving him this opportunity to show that his idea is alive, that we are not burying it, that the United States can continue laboratory work on SDI, but cannot go beyond the framework of research. As for the nuclear maniac, we can handle this issue somehow within the framework of the ABM Treaty too.

[Reagan] I am not sure of that. And anyway, damn it, what kind of agreement are you defending? The ABM Treaty in fact permits each party to deploy 100 antimissiles in one place, leaving all the rest of the territory undefended. Our defense today is the threat of retaliation against the other. That is not defense in the direct sense of the word. If we agree not to exercise the right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for 10 years, we will in fact force the world to live for 10 more years in fear of destruction in nuclear flames. I do not understand the charm of the ABM Treaty, which in fact it signifies guaranteed mutual destruction. We are holding a talk about elimination of missiles, about how we should no longer be threatened with the danger that some gloomy day someone will push the button and everything will be destroyed. But even when we destroy these missiles we must have a defense against others. The genie is already out of the bottle. Offensive weapons can be built again. Therefore I propose creating protection for the world for future generations, when you and I will no longer be here.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, the question of antimissile defense has a long and complex history. This idea, which was formulated in the 1972 ABM Treaty, did not arise accidentally or suddenly. It was the result of many years of debates among the leaders and experts of the United States, the Soviet Union, and other countries. They recognized that construction of a large-scale antimissile defense cannot be permitted—this would spur on the arms race in offensive weapons. If it is built, then there cannot even be talk of any kind of decision to reduce nuclear weapons. The conclusion that the ABM Treaty is needed at the foundation of strategic stability followed long debates. We cannot set aside this conclusion.

The next point is the question of a full ban on nuclear testing. When we were thinking over our proposals, we also took the concerns of the U. S. President into account. This resulted in a formula which considers your interests and ours and combines them. What is our plan? We could give orders to our representatives to begin full-scale negotiations on a complete end to nuclear testing. During the talks each side could act as it considers necessary, in other words even conduct nuclear blasts. We tried to consider the posture of the American side here. In the first stage of the negotiations the questions of a limit on the power of the explosions and their number could be discussed, plus the 1974 and 1976 treaties and questions of monitoring. I repeat, all the time we kept the American side's position in mind and tried to combine our approaches.

And what have we heard from you? The only thing that has sounded in these considerations is the United States' own interests. You suggest talking about the problem of testing, but not about conducting negotiations on a complete end to testing. You must agree that we cannot accept arguments that consider the

interests of just one side. We have reached the stage in our talks when the American side needs to meet us half-way on the questions of antimissile defense and nuclear testing. It is important for you to determine that the true interests of the American side lie in finding mutually acceptable solutions to the problems. We said that President Reagan is a man who does not like to make concessions. I am now convinced of this. But, as the American saying goes, "It takes two to tango." And it takes two to control arms, to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. Our national interests will not be preserved if we retreat from consideration of the interests of the other side. Therefore I invite you to a male tango, Mr. President.

[Reagan] If you remember history it will be understandable why the United States does not want to ban nuclear testing without establishing proper control. There was a time when we worked side by side on this issue. There was a time when a moratorium on nuclear blasts was in effect. It was in force for 3 years. But then the Soviet Union broke the moratorium and began testing with unprecedented intensity. And then it became clear that the United States, which had observed the moratorium, was not prepared for this turn of events. Our President Kennedy stated that the United States would never again let itself be caught in such a situation. You certainly remember that the moratorium was started under Eisenhower, and ended under Kennedy. It took us a very long time then to catch up to the Soviet Union and restore our position, which we had surrendered voluntarily. But the Soviet Union used the period of the moratorium to prepare to create new types of nuclear weapons. To avoid a repetition of this situation we need to ensure reliable control. This work is not completed now. You say that you are ready to accept appropriate controls. We are ready to help you, to join you in this. But only after finishing the development of controls will we be ready to stop testing. There is a good saying to this effect: "Once burned, twice shy."

In our talk yesterday we made a concession to you when we agreed to write down a formula to the effect that the USSR and the United States will begin negotiations on nuclear testing with an agenda that should include the remaining questions of control related to the treaty. In the process of the negotiations the United States and the Soviet Union will move toward stopping nuclear testing along with a gradual, stage-by-stage reduction in nuclear weapons.

[Gorbachev] That wording does not suit us. We propose to solve this question as a package, that is to begin negotiations—full-scale negotiations—on banning nuclear testing. In the first phase of these negotiations we could discuss questions of control, the fate of the 1974 and 1976 treaties, thresholds and number of blasts, but our goal should be to reach an end to all nuclear blasts. The American side, as we see, does not want to designate the topic and goal of the negotiations. It treats them as endless and puts off a solution to the problem of nuclear testing for decades. It is unacceptable to us to use negotiations as a cover for the United States, which wants to keep its freedom of action to conduct as many nuclear blasts as it wants. We are having doubts about the honesty of the U.S. position. A concern is even appearing that the American side has planned something that may damage the Soviet side. In such conditions is it necessary at all to

take up the whole package of eliminating nuclear weapons, what is there to agree about here? After all, the United States is setting the goal of perfecting its nuclear weapons.

[Reagan] It looks like some kind of misunderstanding has come up here. We proposed the wording in English, but obviously the translation into Russian means something else.

[Gorbachev] This is not a matter of words. You know that we are talking about different things.

[Reagan] No, I don't think so. Would it suit you if we changed our wording and said that the United States and the Soviet Union are beginning negotiations whose final goal is a complete end to nuclear testing? Parallel with this the United States and the USSR would carry on a reduction of nuclear weapons, and this activity would occur in such a way as to be combined with a reduction of and [sic] end to nuclear testing.

[Gorbachev] I do not object to having our experts sit down and work out a formula. The main thing [sic] is for it to be clearly reflected that the USSR and the United States are beginning negotiations on a complete and universal end to nuclear testing. Any possibility of circumventing maneuvers here must be precluded. A complete ban on testing as the subject of negotiations and the right of the parties to conduct testing during the negotiations. During the negotiations it would be possible to decide the questions of controls and all the other components part [sic] of the problem—thresholds, the 1974 and 1976 treaties, and number of blasts. That is in the first stage. But in the final stage we are already reaching right up to a ban on nuclear testing. I am saying all this openly and directly. The question is too serious for us to try any tricks here.

[Reagan] Judging by what you just said, the foundation of all the problems that we are running into is your conviction that we are trying to gain some kind of advantage for ourselves and that we feel hostility toward you, and even that we have in mind some kind of hostile actions in relation to you. I say this with regret, but I have to refute you: it is not true. We do not have any hostile intentions toward you. We recognize the differences between our systems, but we think that our countries are entirely capable of living in the world as friendly rivals. I understand that you do not trust us, just as we do not trust you. But I am convinced that historical facts are on our side. Long ago Karl Marx said...

[Gorbachev] Well, earlier the President referred to Lenin, and now he's moved on to Marx.

[Reagan] Everything that Marx said, Lenin said it too. Marx was the first, and Lenin was his follower. And they both said that for the success of socialism it must be victorious throughout the world. They both said that the only morality is that which is in keeping with socialism. And I must say that all the leaders of your country—except you, you still have not said such a thing—more than once stated publicly, usually at party congresses, their support for the proposition that socialism must become worldwide, encompass the whole world, and become a unified world communist state. Maybe you have not managed to express your

views on this yet, or you do not believe it. But so far you have not said it. But all the others said it!

And how can we overcome our mistrust of you if even during World War II when we were fighting together, you did not want to allow Allied bombers flying from England to land in your country before making the return flight?

And what happened after the war's end? Beginning in 1946 we made 19 proposals at various international conferences to eliminate nuclear weapons. At that time we were the only country in the world with nuclear weapons. But you did not want to participate in the realization of our proposals. A little later the USSR deployed missiles on Cuba, 19 [sic] miles from our shores.

I could continue, give other examples of similar steps in a policy which illustrates your conviction of the world mission of socialism. Naturally, this cannot help but arouse our suspicions that you have hostile intentions in relation to us. You, however, have no facts that indicate that we, our people, are yearning for war. There could not be anything more untrue. No one in our country wants our world and freedom to be disrupted by war. I am sure that your people do not want war either.

[Gorbachev] So you are talking about Marx and Lenin again. Many people have already tried to bring down the founders of this well-known line of social thought. No one has been able to do this, and I advise you not to waste time on this.

It is better for us to recall what you and I talked about earlier, and it seems that we have the same opinion on this. We recognize that the American people have a right to select their own social system and their own values. We also have our own system, which we like, while some do not like it. But each people and all peoples have the right to decide how to manage things in their own country, what kind of government to have, and what kind of president to elect. I am sure that any other approach would not get us far. And therefore I was very surprised when I heard that just before our meeting in Reykjavik you stated in your speeches that you remained loyal to the principles set forth by you in your speech at Westminster Palace. And in that speech you said that the Soviet Union is the Evil Empire, and called for a crusade against socialism in order to drive socialism onto the scrap heap of history. I will tell you, that is quite a terrifying philosophy. What does it mean politically, make war against us?

[Reagan] No.

[Gorbachev] But that is exactly what you said as a kind of introductory word before Reykjavik. What kind of hint is that to me? I did not want to recall this at all, but you were the first to start talking about that kind of problems.

[Reagan] The difference between us has always been and still is that we in the United States have a Communist Party whose representatives can vote in elections and even hold certain elected positions and propagate their philosophy, while you do not have anything like that. Instead of trying to convince people that your ideas are right, you impose these ideas and therefore groups of people in the "third world" now and then seize power and the Communist Party gets a

monopoly of power. In our country you can set up any party; it will operate legally and put forward its own candidates. You do not have, say, the Democratic or Republican party; you have one party, and a minority of the people belong to it, for you do not let the majority join. That is our difference. We think that only the people themselves can determine what kind of government they would like to have.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, if you want to carry on such a broad debate on political, ideological, and ethical issues, I am ready for it. And I want to tell you that what you said is very far from the true state of affairs and testifies to enormous differences in our initial ideas. But still you and I agree, in my opinion, that each of our countries can have its own political system and its own ideological ideas; we do not infringe on your religion, and so on. Therefore, wouldn't it be better to stop this argument and return to the issues which we did not complete.

[Reagan] Yes, I think so. Let's return to the question of wording.

[Gorbachev] I do not want to argue with you, and respect your independent nature, and your views and ideas. And I am convinced that if you and I have different ideological ideas, that is not a reason for us to shoot at one another. On the contrary, I am convinced that in addition to political relations purely human relations between us are possible also.

[Reagan] Unquestionably. And I would even like to try to convince you to join the Republican Party.

[Gorbachev] An interesting idea. Incidentally, before the revolution in our country, and after it too, there were many political parties. But today there is indeed just one. That is the result of a definite historical process.

Let us return to the wording. Let's see if we can't find something that would bring our positions together.

[Shultz] I think that we have the beginning of a statement—this is the wording on which our representatives worked during the night and which reflects our agreement on the question of strategic arms, which was reached in principle between the two leaders. I think that similar wording can also be found in relation to intermediate-range nuclear weapons. As for questions from the areas of space, antimissile defense, and SDI, in these we have not reached agreement but have, I think, held useful discussions.

[Gorbachev] Perhaps we can write it this way: the parties recognize and affirm the conditions of the unlimited ABM Treaty and obligate themselves to observe its propositions strictly.

[Shultz] We did not reach agreement on this question, but we to some extent identified the nature and areas of our disagreements. This does not touch the question of observance of the treaty—incidentally, we are observing it completely—but rather raises other aspects, including time and others.

[Gorbachev] But you know, in the context of our understanding on a 50-percent reduction in strategic arms and a reduction in intermediate-range missiles, a statement of the parties that the parties will strictly observe the permanent ABM Treaty simply suggests itself.

[Shevardnadze] I have a question. Is your approach to the question of time of withdrawal from the treaty still in force? I understand that you and we place different interpretations on what would happen within the time when we did not use our right to withdraw from the treaty. And different time periods are being proposed. You are proposing 5 or 7 years, while we propose 15. But in general, is your approach still in force?

[Shultz] The President in his letter proposed a two-stage approach to this issue. And the President's proposal remains in effect.

[Gorbachev] So, as I understand it, you do not agree with the 10-year period?

[Shultz] We have proposed wording which would make it possible to reflect the situation that has developed. It has three aspects. We propose that the two leaders instruct their delegations to study carefully the following substantive questions in order to overcome the disagreements that now exist. In the first place, this means the question of how study of the possibility of creating a long-range strategic defense can be synchronized with realization of our common goal: elimination of ballistic missiles. Both sides say that these questions are interrelated. We propose that this question be studied more thoroughly. In the second place, this means the question of the conditions and times within which the two sides could examine the possibility of a transition to greater reliance on strategic defense.

[Gorbachev] We know that you plan to deploy SDI. But we do not have such plans. And we cannot assume an obligation relative to such a transition. We have a different conception.

[Shultz] I would like to mention also the third question, which we included because you emphasize it so much. This is the situation which would exist until the time when the conditions indicated above were realized. The question is: what general understanding can the parties reach relative to the restrictions imposed by the ABM Treaty on activity related to creating a long-range strategic defense?

The President stated to you and the whole world that he will not renounce the SDI program. You do not agree with that. But as I understand it, you recognize his problem and that he is trying to meet your concern half-way.

[Gorbachev] But I think that I am even helping the President with SDI. After all, your people say that if Gorbachev attacks SDI and space weapons so much, it means the idea deserves more respect. They even say that if it were not for me, no one would listen to the idea at all. And some even claim that I want to drag the United States into unnecessary expenditures with this. But if the first ones are right, then I am on your side in this matter, but you have not appreciated it.

[Reagan] What the hell use will ABM's or anything else be if we eliminate nuclear weapons?

[Gorbachev] Absolutely right. I am for that. But the point is that under the ABM Treaty the parties do not have a large-scale antimissile defense, and you want to deploy such a defense.

[Reagan] But what difference does it make if it is not nuclear weapons? What difference whether it exists or not?

On the other hand, you know that even in this situation we will not be able to guarantee that someone will not begin to make nuclear weapons again at some point.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, you just made a historic statement: What the hell use will SDI be if we eliminate nuclear weapons? But it is exactly because we are moving toward a reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons that I favor strengthening the ABM Treaty. In these conditions it becomes even more important. As for your arguments about the madman who decides to resort to nuclear weapons, I think that we will be able to solve that problem. It is not that serious.

[Reagan] It appears that the point is that I am the oldest man here. And I understand that after the war the nations decided that they would renounce poison gases. But thank God that the gas mask continued to exist. Something similar can happen with nuclear weapons. And we will have a shield against them in any case.

[Gorbachev] I am increasingly convinced of something I knew previously only second-hand. The President of the United States does not like to retreat. I see now that you do not want to meet us half-way on the issue of the ABM Treaty, which is absolutely essential in conditions where we are undertaking large reductions in nuclear arms, and you do not want to begin negotiations on stopping nuclear testing. So I see that the possibilities of agreement are exhausted.

[Reagan] It seems to me that we have agreement on the question of nuclear testing.

[Shevardnadze] I would still like to return to the question of the ABM Treaty. Perhaps we can set aside certain issues that I would call ideological and agree to set times within which the parties would not exercise their right to withdraw from the treaty.

[Gorbachev] It seems absolutely axiomatic to me that if the parties are undertaking deep reductions in nuclear weapons, there must be an atmosphere of confidence, and to achieve that the conditions of the ABM Treaty must be toughened.

[Shevardnadze] And periods of mandatory observance named.

[Gorbachev] If we were to agree that such a period would be 10 years, it would be possible to carry out major reductions of nuclear potential during this period.

[Shevardnadze] This is the fundamental question, for if we do not have agreement on periods of non-withdrawal from the treaty, there will be no agreement on nuclear weapons either. Then it will come out that we have not agreed on anything.

[Gorbachev] I proposed a definite package and would ask you to consider it as such.

[Reagan] I do not think that a link has to be established between reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty which only restricts defense against such weapons. Incidentally, we believe that you are violating this treaty. You have built more than is allowed under it. At the same time we are fully complying with it and have not built more than allowed under the treaty.

[Gorbachev] So on two issues you and I now have a common position. On the others we have had an interesting exchange of opinions, but did not reach a unified opinion. I think that we can conclude our meeting with this. It still has not been in vain. Granted that it did not produce the results which were expected in the Soviet Union and the United States, which I expected, but we must take account of the realities. And the reality is that we are unable to work out agreed-upon proposals on these issues. You and I talked about the possibility of major reductions in nuclear weapons; but if the fate of the ABM Treaty is unclear, then the entire conception collapses and we return to the situation that existed before Reykjavik.

Perhaps you will report this to Congress, and we will report to the Politburo and the Supreme Soviet. I do not think the world will stop. Events will unfold, and neither will our relations stop. But we will not succeed in taking advantage of the present opportunity to give a strong impetus in the main areas of our relations.

[Reagan] I thought that we had agreement on the 50-percent reduction and on intermediate-range missiles. In addition we can continue discussion of the question of ABM's and restricting testing. On this issue we think that as nuclear weapons are reduced we would come to stop nuclear testing. How could it not be? How can we go away from here with nothing?

[Gorbachev] Unfortunately, we in fact can. Of course, we have not discussed humanitarian issues yet. Perhaps we should talk about them? In addition there are the regional problems, in general the problems which the second working group discussed.

[Reagan] Yes, it is my understanding that this group reconciled the proposals which were delivered to us.

"Having examined the state of affairs in a number of important areas of bilateral Soviet-American cooperation, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the President of the United States agreed to assign their ministers of foreign affairs to give an additional impetus to mutual efforts to achieve agreements in those areas where the positions of the two countries have a common foundation. Among these areas are nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, creation of centers to reduce the nuclear peril, bolstering the safety of the nuclear power industry, peaceful use of space, the fight against international terrorism, and international cooperation in the area of thermonuclear synthesis.

"Humanitarian problems and questions of human rights were also discussed. The parties presented their corresponding positions and expressed willingness to continue the exchange of opinions on these issues.

"The leaders of the two countries discussed regional problems, including their impact on relations between the USSR and the United States. The parties expressed their support of peaceful political settlement of regional conflicts. They assigned the ministers of foreign affairs to continue and broaden the dialogue on these problems.

"The parties agreed on the following:

- “continue regular consultation on the question of nonproliferation of nuclear weapons;
- “in the near future begin negotiations on the establishment of national centers in Moscow and Washington to reduce the nuclear peril and their functions;
- “continue bilateral contacts within the IAEA framework to facilitate the Agency’s work to ensure safety in the development of nuclear power engineering;
- “intensify practical efforts on a bilateral and multilateral basis to establish cooperation in the development of thermonuclear synthesis, a promising energy source. Instruct each side’s experts to meet by 1 November of this year to review the results of each side’s study of the possibilities of cooperation in this area and discuss subsequent steps;
- “give instructions to each side’s delegation to develop and prepare for signing the text of an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the peaceful development of space;
- “agree no later than 20 October of this year on the time and place for preliminary discussions relative to renewing the agreement on transportation or concluding a new one and, possibly also the agreement on power engineering and pure sciences, as well as the agreements on search and rescue at sea and cooperation in the field of radio navigation;
- “discuss the concrete possibilities of bilateral cooperation as well as participation in international activities aimed at eliminating all forms of terrorism and ensuring the safety of ground, air, and maritime travel; hold bilateral consultations to prevent terrorist acts;
- “resolve practical issues linked to the opening of general consulates of the parties in New York and Kiev, respectively;
- “instruct the delegations of the two sides to step up work to achieve a mutually acceptable understanding concerning border lines in the maritime spaces of the Arctic and Pacific Oceans and the Chukchi and Bering Seas;
- “instruct their representatives to work out common positions to give the status of an agreement to the existing understanding on the CAPCAT search and rescue system;
- “resolve through diplomatic channels the question of setting up a commission to examine bilateral issues;
- “determine the practical possibility of discussing humanitarian questions within the framework of the expert consultations being conducted between the two countries.”

It is true that nothing is said here about one issue, human rights. I do not want to make any demands on you relative to reunification of families, emigration, the status of believers, and so on. But I would like you to understand that this is a fundamentally important factor in determining the degree to which we will be able to cooperate with you in important areas. Our public opinion, owing to the

ethnic roots of our people, attaches enormous importance to this, and that is a reality that must be considered. That is why the reduction in the rate of emigration causes such concern in our country. We are giving you a list of persons who we know have expressed a desire to emigrate, but have not received permission. We hope that you will soften the restrictions. We will not brag that we got this done; we will just thank you for such a decision.

[Gorbachev] It is a shame, Mr. President, that you and I do not have enough time to discuss humanitarian issues. We have concrete ideas on this which we simply are not going to have time to discuss. I have to say that people in the Soviet Union are very concerned about the human rights situation in the United States. There is one other important subject. This is the importance of mutual information in our day. The situation now is this: the Voice of America broadcasts around the clock in many languages from stations that you have in various countries of Europe and Asia, while we cannot present our point of view to the American people. Therefore, to achieve parity, we are forced to jam Voice of America broadcasts. I propose the following: we will stop jamming Voice of America and you will be able to broadcast what you consider necessary to us, but at the same time you will meet us half-way and help us lease, from you or in neighboring countries, radio stations that would allow us to reach the American people with our point of view.

[Reagan] The difference between us is that we recognize freedom of the press and the right of people to listen to any point of view. This does not exist in your press. Today in Washington there will be a press conference, and Americans will see it, and newspapers will publish the text of it. It is not that way in your country. Your system envisions only a government press.

[Gorbachev] But I asked a concrete question. I proposed that we can stop jamming Voice of America if you will meet us half-way and give us an opportunity to lease a radio station from you or lease or build a station in one of your neighboring countries.

[Reagan] I will consult about this when I return to the United States, and I will take a favorable position.

[Gorbachev] We are for parity in general. In the information field, for example, or in film. Almost half of the movies showing in our theaters are American. Soviet movies are hardly ever shown in the United States. That is not parity.

[Reagan] We do not have any ban on your movies. The film industry is a free business, and if someone wants to show your films he can do it.

[Gorbachev] I see that the President avoids this question and goes into talk about business.

[Reagan] Our government cannot control the film market. If you want to inundate us with your movies, go right ahead. How our movies get to your country, I do not know.

[Gorbachev] It is an interesting situation, simply a paradox. In your country, the most democratic country, obstacles arise to showing our movies, while in our country, a totalitarian country, almost half the movies being shown are American.

How can you reconcile this, that the Soviet Union is an undemocratic country but your films are being shown?

[Reagan] There is a difference between free enterprise and government ownership. You have no free enterprise, everything belongs to the government and the government puts everything on the market. In the United States we have private industry, and other countries have the right to sell their goods, movies, and so on. You have the right to set up a rental organization in our country to distribute your movies, or to lease some theater. But we cannot order it.

[Gorbachev] One more question. There were two television bridges between the USSR and the United States recently. One involved the participation of the communities of Leningrad, Copenhagen, and Boston, and the other had Soviet and American doctors. In our country they were watched by 150 million people, but in the United States they were not shown.

[Reagan] The only thing I can answer is that the movie theaters and all belong to your government, and you show what you want to in them. But our government cannot compete with private business.

But I want to tell you that your performing groups, such as the Leningrad Ballet, draw an enormous crowd in the United States, and they are shown on television too. But if you want to show other things too, please do. We have leasing companies, and theaters which show foreign films.

[Gorbachev] Mr. President, we have quite a few complaints about the United States. Here is the last question. For 30 years now you have refused to let our trade union figures enter the United States. Mr. Shultz simply does not give them visas. Where is the parity here? You know, your trade union figures come to the USSR and have interesting professional contacts and meetings with workers. But you do not let our people in. In your country, which is so self-confident, they are viewed as subversive elements.

[Reagan] I would like to look into this. Maybe I will have some proposals on the film problem that you mentioned.

[Gorbachev] Good.

[Reagan] One more thing. I cannot return home and say nothing to our farmers on the issue that is so important to them. Why didn't you fulfill your obligation relative to grain purchases from us?

[Gorbachev] It is very simple. You can tell them that the money with which the Russians could have bought grain ended up in the United States and Saudi Arabia because of the sharp drop in oil prices. So the United States already has this money.

[Reagan] The oil business in the United States suffered greatly from the drop in oil prices. Many countries suffered because of the OPEC actions.

[Gorbachev] We know that. We know who began this process of cutting oil prices, and whose interests it is in.

[Reagan] This point is that the oil industry in most countries of the world is private, but in the OPEC countries it belongs to the government. They want to dominate the market and drive others out. That is why they resort to such actions.

I have one more question. I received a letter from the prominent cellist, your former citizen M. Rostropovich. In it he included a copy of a letter sent to you by ordinary mail. It appears that you did not receive it. He asks you to help his sister and brother travel to the West for 2 months so that they can participate in the celebration of his birthday.

[Gorbachev] I read that letter and gave it to the appropriate organs with a request to help Rostropovich's relatives travel to his birthday. I think that this matter has already been resolved.

[Reagan] You see, you have your own bureaucracy, just like I have mine. In any case, he did not receive an answer.

[Shevardnadze] His relatives know that their trip has been authorized.

[Gorbachev] I remember his letter. One more thing he wrote there was that he did not know if it would reach me.

Well, Mr. President, "X-hour" is approaching. What are you going to do?

[Shultz] I have tried to write a text here that reflects what we agreed about, on strategic weapons and intermediate-range missiles, as well as our disagreements on the issues of space and ABM's. In this area I suggest that we write that the President and the General Secretary discussed issues related to the ABM Treaty, long-range strategic defense, and its interrelations with the levels of offensive ballistic missiles. The discussion was intensive and thorough. They are instructing their delegations in Geneva to use the materials from their discussion to move ahead in their work.

[Gorbachev] That is not acceptable to us. What else do you want to write?

[Shultz] Something also on the issue of intermediate-range missiles.

[Gorbachev] But on that issue everything is clear.

[Shultz] But the understanding needs to be set forth.

[Gorbachev] Maybe, if the President does not object, we will declare a break for 1-2 hours and during that time, possibly, our ministers will try to propose something. I think that we can slow down a little. After all, we do not want everything to end with a facade.

[Shultz] I think that we can reach agreement on nuclear testing, find some formula.

[Shevardnadze] I think so too. But the main thing is that we need a fundamental decision concerning a period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.

[Gorbachev] It is exceptionally important to reaffirm the ABM Treaty. Then we can substantiate the risk that we are taking in questions of strategic weapons and intermediate-range missiles. And so, if the President does not object, we will take a break until 1500 hours.

[Source: FBIS-USR-93-113, 30 August 1993. Transcript of Reagan-Gorbachev Reykjavik Talks: Part 3. 93WC0096A Moscow MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZH-DUNARODNYYE OTNOSHENIYA in Russian No 7, Jul 93 pp 88-104.]

Document No. 32: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Fourth Meeting, Reykjavik,
3:25 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

October 12, 1986

The final dramatic afternoon at Reykjavik features two extended sessions of talks, one starting at 3:30 p.m. and the last starting at 5:30. The American and Soviet transcripts provide very congruent versions of both sessions, thus this volume uses the American memcon for the 3:30 talks, and the more detailed Russian document for the finale. The negotiation begins with Gorbachev upping the ante on 50 percent reductions in all strategic offensive weapons over five years, with the rest to follow in 10 years as long as SDI stays in the labs. Reagan responds with an actual advance on prior American proposals, inspired by national security adviser John Poindexter who understands that if the U.S. rejects every Soviet concession just to hold onto an idea of SDI that is not even close to deployment, the U.S. will lose in the court of world opinion. So Poindexter's chief expert, Air Force Colonel Robert Linhard, scribbled out what Reagan later would call "the most sweeping and generous arms control proposal in history."⁸³ Linhard reworked the July 25 proposal by expanding the seven-and-a-half-year period of ABM Treaty compliance to ten years, by which point all ballistic missiles would be gone, while at five years Gorbachev's idea of 50 percent cuts in all strategic arsenals would be implemented. The back and forth at this session includes some remarkable highlights, including Reagan painting an amazing scene when the two leaders would return to Iceland ten years hence to hold a ceremony to destroy their last remaining missiles. Reagan would be very old and Gorbachev, not recognizing him, would ask, "Ron, is it you?" After a vigorous hour, the group recesses at 4:30, at which point Linhard and the Pentagon's Richard Perle retreat to a bathroom on the American side of Hofdi House and use a board across the tub as a desk to reframe the U.S. proposal according to the Soviet format.

INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION

The President and Gorbachev had arrived for this final meeting at 3:00 PM. For an hour before that, Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had discussed language concerning arms control. When the President and Gorbachev arrived, the Secretary and the Foreign Minister informed them, separately, about their discussions. The President and Gorbachev then began their meeting, twenty-minutes after the hour.

⁸³ Reagan quoted by Amb. James E. Goodby, "Looking Back: The Reykjavik Summit," http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006_09/Lookingback

Gorbachev began by reading a counterproposal of the Soviet side, just worked out, based on the text which Secretary Shultz had transmitted to Shevardnadze, *ad referendum*, during their meeting between 2:00 and 3:00 PM. The text of the U.S. proposal, as read by the Secretary to Shevardnadze, had been as follows:

Both sides would agree to confine themselves to research, development and testing which is permitted by the ABM Treaty for a period of five years, through 1991, during which time a 50% reduction in strategic offensive arsenals would be achieved. This being done, both sides will continue the pace of reductions with respect to all remaining offensive ballistic missiles with the goal of the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles by the end of a second five-year period. As long as these reductions continue at the appropriate pace, the same restrictions will continue to apply. At the end of the ten-year period, with all offensive ballistic missiles eliminated, either side would be free to introduce defenses.

In introducing his counterproposal, *Gorbachev* began by saying that it incorporated the positions of the U.S. and Soviet sides and also strengthened the ABM Treaty, while drastically reducing nuclear arms. The counterproposal was as follows:

The USSR and the United States undertake for ten years not to exercise their existing right of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, which is of unlimited duration, and during that period strictly to observe all its provisions. The testing in space of all space components of anti-ballistic missile defense is prohibited, except research and testing conducted in laboratories. Within the first five years of the ten-year period (and thus by the end of 1991), the strategic offensive arms of the two sides shall be reduced by 50 percent. During the following five years of that period, the remaining 50 percent of the two sides' strategic offensive arms shall be reduced. Thus by the end of 1996, the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States will have been totally eliminated.

Gorbachev said this contained elements of both the Soviet and the U.S. proposals. The Soviets were prepared to agree that day to confirm the situation as it exists with the ABM Treaty and to enrich it by the commitment to eliminate strategic offensive weapons.

The President said this seemed only slightly different from the U.S. position. *The Secretary* noted that there were indeed differences.

The President said he had the following proposal. (He then read the U.S. proposal cited above, under *Introductory Explanation*.)

Gorbachev said his view was that the Soviets had moved forward by adopting the periodization proposed by the U.S.—two five-year periods—while strengthening the ABM Treaty and linking strengthening the ABM Treaty with reductions. With regard to the U.S. side's formula, it does not satisfy Soviet requirements. The Soviets' main objective, for the period when we are pursuing deep reductions, is to strengthen the ABM Treaty regime and not to undermine it. He would thus once again ask the U.S. side to meet this minimal requirement. Their proposal was intended to assure that today's ABM Treaty is confirmed and strengthened, with secure obligations that for ten years it will not be gone

around, that there will be no deployment of systems in space, as we go through deep reductions to elimination of offensive weapons.

Gorbachev said he wanted to stress that the ban would not be on research and testing in laboratories. They would be confined to laboratories, but this would open opportunities for both the U.S. and Soviet sides to do all the necessary research in the field of space systems such as SDI. It would not undermine SDI, but would put it in a certain framework. He asked the President for an agreement that met these requirements.

The President said that we had wanted to meet the Soviet need for ten years, and we had done so. He asked why there should be any restrictions beyond that period, when both sides will have gotten what they claim they want—the elimination of offensive missiles. Why impose restrictions beyond the ten-year period, he asked.

Gorbachev said this was not something that needed to be put down on paper.

The President said he did not see what the basic difference was, unless it was the interpretation of the Treaty.

Gorbachev said that with regard to his proposal he did not know why it could not be accepted. After ten years the two sides could find out what the solutions were through talks. The solution would not necessarily be SDI. The U.S. might find it was SDI, and the Soviets might find it was something else. He didn't see why we need to sign on blindly to SDI at this point. Thus the Soviets had come up with a formula that meets this: in the next several years after the ten-year period the two sides would find solutions in this field in negotiations. This was a broad formula that after ten years the U.S. could continue SDI if it wanted. If the U.S. wanted, this could be discussed in negotiations, after the ten years. Why pledge to SDI right now, he asked.

The President replied that he assumed both sides agreed that verification would assure that neither had ballistic missiles after the ten years. Isn't it necessary to pledge something to assure a defense someone [sic] who might come along and want to redevelop nuclear missiles, he asked.

Gorbachev said that at least it was the Soviet view that for ten years, while we proceed to the unique historical task of eliminating nuclear forces, we should strengthen the ABM Treaty regime. Why should we create other problems whose prospects are dim and whose consequences are unknown, that leave one side in doubt about reducing nuclear weapons while the other side retains them under the guise of defensive weapons. Why burden agreement by these weights? It was hard enough to come to this agreement. That is why they link reductions to doing without defensive systems for ten years. Afterwards we can discuss them. But during the ten years there should be only laboratory research. We can see what the situation is while we eliminate offensive weapons, and then discuss what next after that. It is comprehensible and logical to retain the Treaty. The U.S. side would be permitted laboratory research, and of course the Soviet side would too. In the U.S. case this would mean SDI. The Soviets were not trying to bury SDI.

The President said the Soviets had asked for ten years, and we had given ten and a half, because after ten years we would have to give the six-month withdrawal notice. During that period both sides would be able to do the research, development and testing which is permitted by the ABM Treaty. If they then decide to go forward with defenses, what objection can there be unless something is being hidden? This provides protection for the future. We will make it available to the Soviet side if it wants it.

If the Soviets felt that strongly about strengthening the ABM Treaty, why didn't they get rid of Krasnoyarsk and the whole defense structure they have built around their capital, the President asked. They have a big defense structure and we have none. It is a peculiar fact that we do not have a single defense against a nuclear attack.

Gorbachev again asked that the President look at the Soviet proposal, which, he said, incorporated both the U.S. and the Soviet point of view. If it were acceptable, the Soviet side would be prepared to sign off on it.

At this point *the Secretary* asked Simons to type up the Soviet proposal, and shortly thereafter Palazhchenko went to dictate an English translation of it to Simons.

The President said that he thought the two sides were very close to an agreement.

Gorbachev noted that an addition should be made to the text which the Soviet side had just transmitted to the effect that during the next few years after the ten-year period the two sides should negotiate a mutually acceptable solution concerning their future course of action. The U.S. side feels that this should be SDI. The Soviet side might want something else. But the Soviet formula would permit finding a mutually acceptable solution for future activity after the ten-year period. Why would this not be satisfactory to the U.S./ [sic]

The President replied that if both sides had completely eliminated nuclear weapons and there was no longer any threat, why would there be any concern if one side built a safeguard, a defensive system against non-existent weapons, in case there might be a need for it in the future? The President had a different picture—perhaps after the ten-year period the Soviet side would want to build new missiles, and would not want the U.S. to have defenses against them. But he preferred to see a different formula. Ten years from now he would be a very old man. He and *Gorbachev* would come to Iceland and each of them would bring the last nuclear missile from each country with them. Then they would give a tremendous party for the whole world.

Gorbachev interjected that he thought the two sides were close to reaching a common formula. He did not think the U.S. should suspect the Soviet Union of having evil designs. If it had such designs, it would not have gone so far in proposing reductions of strategic and medium-range missiles.

The President continued to describe his vision of their meeting in Iceland ten years from now. He would be very old by then and *Gorbachev* would not

recognize him. The President would say, "Hello, Mikhail." And Gorbachev would say, "Ron, is it you?" And then they would destroy the last missiles.

Gorbachev replied that he did not know if we would live another ten years.

The President said he was counting on living that long.

Gorbachev said that the President had gotten past the dangerous period and would now live to be 100, but in his case he was in the most dangerous period of a man's life, especially after negotiating with the President, who was sapping all the strength he had. He had heard that the President did not like to make concessions and wanted only to come out a winner. But he thought both sides ought to be winners. *The President* remarked that he would not live to 100 if he had to worry every day about being hit by a Soviet missile.

Gorbachev replied that they had agreed to eliminate them.

The President repeated that both sides had gotten good results, i.e. a 50% reduction in the first stage and total elimination in the second. *Gorbachev* had pledged to his people back home that he would get a ten-year period, and the President had pledged that he would not give up SDI. He had already agreed to delaying SDI deployment, but he could go back and say that he had not given up SDI, and *Gorbachev* could say that he had gotten the ten-year period. The President thought that the U.S. people and the Soviet people would cheer that they had gotten rid of nuclear missiles, and would be happy for the two of them.

Gorbachev reiterated that what the Soviets said about research and testing in the laboratory constituted the basis and the opportunity for the U.S. to go on within the framework of SDI. So the U.S. would not have renounced SDI on its side. He was a convinced opponent of a situation where there is a winner and a loser. In that case, after the agreement is ratified, the loser would take steps to undermine the agreement, so that could not be the right basis. There had to be an equal footing. The documents should be deserving of ratification as being in the interest of both sides.

The President asked what then is wrong with going by this and then saying that the question of the research, development and testing which is permitted by the ABM Treaty is reserved for their meeting in Washington, that they then could decide whether it is under the ABM provisions.

Gorbachev replied that without that there was no package. He believed the Soviet side had convinced the U.S. side of the existence of an interrelationship between the issues. If we agree on deep reductions in nuclear weapons we need confidence that the ABM Treaty will be observed during the period of the process of eliminating them. This would be a very historic period, improving a dangerous situation after a period of tensions. This decision would also be in the interest of the U.S. during that time.

The President commented that they were not getting anyplace. He proposed they consider why there was an objection to the U.S. formula if they agreed that ten years down the road there would be no ballistic missiles. He proposed a recess where they would meet with their people, and see what is keeping them apart.

Gorbachev said that a phrase should be added to the text which the Soviet side had transmitted to the effect that both sides should arrive at a mutually acceptable solution, through negotiation, about what to do following the ten-year period. This reflected the President's ideas on SDI.

(At this point the typed version of the Soviet counterproposal was brought in.)

The President said Secretary Shultz would speak about differences between the two texts. *The Secretary* said there seemed to be two differences. The first is how to handle what is permitted during the ten years. The second, if he understood correctly, is that the Soviets see a period of indefinite duration for agreement not to depart from the ABM Treaty, while the U.S. side sees ten years.

Gorbachev said we needed clarity at this stage about whether to undertake real reductions while strengthening, not weakening, the ABM Treaty regime. Thus, the right to withdraw that both sides have now would not be used for ten years and after ten years we would consider how to deal with the question. Perhaps we would keep to it, perhaps there would be new elements. But in those ten years we would strengthen and not weaken the Treaty regime.

The Secretary asked whether *Gorbachev* was saying that after ten years the aspect about not withdrawing would also be over. *Gorbachev* replied that after ten years the two sides could exercise all sorts of rights. *The Secretary* commented that that helped. *Gorbachev* suggested they add to the text the sentence "In the course of the succeeding several years, the two sides should find in the course of negotiations further mutually acceptable solutions in this field." *Shevardnadze* commented that under the Soviet proposal there would be no limit on research, except that it would be confined to laboratories.

Gorbachev asked the President to recall their meeting in Geneva. The President was host; it was on the last night; they were sitting on the sofa drinking coffee. They were in a good atmosphere. At that point Shultz came in to report that the Soviet delegation did not agree on certain points. The President had asked him, sitting there on the sofa, what the hell should be done, and suggested banging his hand on the table. He (*Gorbachev*) had gone out, and in fifteen minutes everything was fixed. Now they could go out in the same way, and the President could go out and fix everything in ten minutes. It would be another victory for the U.S. side.

The Secretary said he wanted to be clear about one thing. The Soviet proposal said that during the second five-year period the remaining weapons would be "reduced." Did "reduced" mean at a constant pace? *Gorbachev* said that the modalities could be written down in the treaty. *The Secretary* noted that the President talked about strategic offensive weapons.

Gorbachev recalled that the day before the Soviets had proposed that all types of strategic forces be cut by half. This was for the first five years. It covered the whole triad. The second five-year period would take care of the rest of the strategic forces.

The Secretary noted that our proposal referred to "offensive ballistic missiles," and the Soviet to "strategic offensive arms." These may be different categories. He wanted to be sure.

Gorbachev repeated that the Soviets had made a proposal the day before. He could say frankly it had not been a [sic] easy decision. If we try to search for agreements on subceilings, we will never get out of it. He had suggested that they cut through this, and cut everything by 50%, including the SS-18s the U.S. was concerned about. Other missiles which were not strategic would be covered by the separate agreements that have been made.

The President and the General Secretary agreed to take a break to sort out the differences between the two texts. (The break lasted from 4:30 to 5:30 PM.).

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 33: Transcript of Gorbachev–Reagan Reykjavik Talks, Final Meeting

October 12, 1986

The last session at Reykjavik—here in the somewhat more extensive Russian memoir—is the one that inspired Gorbachev’s comment in his memoir about “Shakespearean passions” (along with several successful plays and documentaries). Reagan already aches to return home—the event has run long and he has been counting on Sunday dinner with Nancy. Jack Matlock later laments that his worst mistake in summit preparation was assuming it would be a short meeting with no social or ceremonial sessions and no reason to have Nancy present. But Raisa is in Iceland, which raises the stakes—and Reagan’s obstinacy.

The transcript shows considerable confusion between proposals to reduce ballistic missiles versus all nuclear weapons, but finally Reagan raises the issue he has always wanted to promote—nuclear abolition. “We can do that. Let’s eliminate them,” says Gorbachev, and Shultz reinforces the idea: “Let’s do it.” But almost immediately the delegations circle back to SDI and the ABM Treaty. Gorbachev insists on including the word “laboratory,” meaning testing must be confined to the lab, and Reagan, already hostile to the ABM Treaty, continues to see this as tantamount to giving up SDI. Gorbachev declares that if he returns to Moscow and announces he has agreed to let testing go on outside the lab and that the system could go online in ten years he would be called a “ðypak” (a fool, or dupe) and not a leader. The transcript shows Reagan asking Gorbachev coming to an agreement as a personal favor, and Gorbachev replying, well, if that were about agriculture, maybe, but this is about fundamental national security. The round-and-round is almost impossible to summarize; one can only imagine the atmosphere and the stakes. Finally, at around 6:30 p.m., Reagan closes his briefing book and stands up. The American and the Russian transcripts differ on the final words—the Russian has more detail—but the sense is the same. Their faces reflect the disappointment. Gorbachev has forced Reagan to say nyet, but it is Gorbachev who will probably lose more from the failure.

[Text] G. Shultz and E. A. Shevardnadze were present during the talks

Reagan. We have kept you a long time, because it hasn’t been easy reaching an agreement between us. We have sought a formulation which would meet you halfway with respect to your desire regarding the 10-year period. Here is the final option which we can offer:

“The USSR and the U.S. pledge for a period of 10 years not to exercise their right to withdraw from the unlimited ABM Treaty and, during that period, to comply strictly with all its provisions, while at the same time continuing research, development, and testing permitted by the ABM Treaty.

“In the course of the first five years (until 1991 inclusive), there will be a 50-percent reduction in the two sides’ strategic offensive weapons.

“In the course of the following five years of that period, the remaining offensive ballistic missiles of both sides will be reduced.

“In this way, by the end of 1996 the USSR and the U.S. will have completely eliminated all offensive ballistic missiles.

“At the end of the 10-year period, each side may deploy defensive systems if they so desire, provided that the two sides do not agree on something else.”

How do you feel about that formula?

Gorbachev. I have two questions for you by way of clarifying the American formulation. You speak of research, development, and testing permitted by the ABM Treaty. Your formula omits any mention of laboratory testing. Was this done specially?

Reagan. At the negotiations in Geneva our delegations discussed the question of what comprises research and other activities permitted by the ABM Treaty. This question could have been settled at the talks in Geneva.

Gorbachev. What I’m asking is, did you omit the mention of laboratories deliberately or not?

Reagan. Yes it was deliberate, what’s the matter?

Gorbachev. I’m simply clarifying the American formulation. For the time being I’m not commenting. Another question: the first half of the formula talks about the two sides’ strategic offensive weapons which will be reduced by 50 percent in the first five years, but in the second part, which talks about the following five years, it mentions offensive ballistic missiles. What is being referred to here? Why this difference in approach?

Reagan. We were told during the break that the Soviet side would like a special mention of offensive strategic missiles. That’s why we included that formula. It’s true that in the first part we talk about all types of strategic nuclear weapons, including missiles and bombs aboard bombers. In the second part, however, we talk about ballistic missiles, in the belief that that’s what you want.

Gorbachev. There is some kind of confusion here. When it comes to strategic offensive weapons, we agreed between us long ago that they include all components of the triad—ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. I don’t see what could have changed in this question. If we’re talking about a different class of missiles—RSD [medium-range missiles] and those having a range of less than 1,000 kilometers—the reduction of them is provided for in a different part of the package. We also are not removing anything from our proposals here. But as for the first part of your formulation and the second part regarding the following five years, the wording has to be identical. If we’re talking about a 50-percent reduction in strategic offensive weapons, then in the following five years the remaining 50 percent of strategic offensive weapons must be eliminated.

Reagan. I understand, then, that by the end of 1996 all strategic offensive ballistic missiles will be eliminated?

Gorbachev. How about airplanes? After all, strategic weapons represent a triad which includes ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers. So it is clear between us what strategic weapons are. And our group, which worked this evening, recorded that all elements of the triad are to be reduced by 50 percent.

Reagan. What I want to know is, will all offensive ballistic missiles be eliminated?

Gorbachev. The first part of your formulation talks about strategic offensive weapons, while the second part speaks only about ballistic missiles. Of course, strategic weapons include ballistic missiles—ground-based and submarine-launched missiles, and also bombers. Why does the second part of your formulation speak only about ballistic missiles?

Reagan. Is that the only thing you object to?

Gorbachev. I'm just trying to clarify the issue.

Reagan. It will have to be sorted out.

Gorbachev. What we need here is for both formulations to be identical. If we talk about all the components in the first case, everything also needs to be clear in the second case.

Reagan. Evidently we have simply misunderstood you. But if that's what you want, all right.

Shultz. We need to be careful here. When we talk of eliminating all strategic offensive weapons, it does not refer to shorter-range ballistic missiles. I know that the question of them is handled within the framework of a different category, but it is here, it seems to me, that we ought to take decisive measures.

Gorbachev. Perhaps you could have your second paragraph say that in the following five years the remaining 50 percent of strategic offensive weapons will be eliminated, including ballistic missiles. As for shorter-range missiles, we deal with them in the second point of our agreement. Missiles having a range of less than 1,000 kilometers are being frozen, and negotiations are underway concerning their future fate. This is dealt with in the section on medium-range missiles, but this question is also covered.

Shultz. Perhaps we could formulate it this way: by the end of 1996 all strategic offensive weapons and all offensive ballistic missiles of the USSR and the U.S. will be eliminated.

Gorbachev. But the question of other ballistic missiles is dealt with within the framework of another category, and this has to be mentioned there.

Shultz. But there the question of their elimination does not come up.

Gorbachev. We will freeze them, we will begin negotiations about their fate, and I think we'll decide their fate.

Shultz. In regard to intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, we did not talk about two five-year periods. We talked about an agreement which will exist until such time as it is replaced. If we agree that this will happen in five years, by the end of that period all missiles will be eliminated.

Gorbachev. We can agree on all missiles, including those having a range of less than 1,000 kilometers. But here, when we are dealing with the context of

the ABM Treaty we are talking about strategic offensive weapons. And we share with you our understanding of what constitutes strategic offensive weapons.

Shultz. But the ABM Treaty has to do with all missiles, not just strategic ones. But perhaps we have nothing to quarrel about here?

Gorbachev. I don't think there is any disagreement between us in this regard, and we only have to find a way to reflect our agreement.

Shultz. That's why I propose that we write that by the end of 1996 all strategic offensive weapons and all offensive ballistic missiles are to be eliminated.

Gorbachev. But in that case we will again have different formulations in the first and the second paragraphs. I think we can settle this matter when formulating our agreements.

Reagan. Let me ask this: Do we have in mind—and I think it would be very good—that by the end of the two five-year periods all nuclear explosive devices would be eliminated, including bombs, battlefield systems, cruise missiles, submarine weapons, intermediate-range systems, and so on?

Gorbachev. We could say that, list all those weapons.

Shultz. Then let's do it.

Reagan. If we agree that by the end of the 10-year period all nuclear weapons are to be eliminated, we can turn this agreement over to our delegations in Geneva so that they can prepare a treaty which you can sign during your visit to the U.S.

Gorbachev. Well, all right. Here we have a chance for an agreement. What I am seriously concerned about is another factor. What we are talking about is to comply strictly with the unlimited ABM Treaty for the purpose of pledging not to exercise the right to withdraw from the treaty for 10 years. We are doing this under conditions of reducing nuclear weapons. We don't understand, then, why the American side does not agree to having research, development, and testing be restricted to the confines of the laboratory. If we write it a different way, this will enable one of the sides to interpret the ABM Treaty such that it can conduct such work where it pleases while claiming that it is not violating the ABM Treaty. What effect will that have on the process of nuclear weapons reduction that has been undertaken by that time? A negative one, of course. It will create an unequal situation, impair the security of one of the sides, and lose in clarity. Hence, the ABM Treaty has to be strengthened, which means that we cannot remove the mention of laboratories from our text. This cannot be done if we insist on precise compliance with the ABM Treaty. The question of laboratories is of fundamental importance.

Reagan. I do not agree that strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty means restricting the testing of ABM components solely to laboratories. We have a difference in the interpretation of the ABM Treaty which we have acknowledged. From the standpoint of the substance of the issue, in my opinion, it is of no importance. Our aim is to safeguard ourselves from a revival of missiles after they have been destroyed, in order to make a kind of gas mask against nuclear missiles and deploy a defense system. Moreover, we view this variant only as a

possibility, as one probable outcome. I have already spoken of this. And I have also spoken of the danger of nuclear maniacs.

Gorbachev. Yes, I've heard all about gas masks and maniacs, probably ten times already. But it still does not convince me.

Reagan. I'm talking about one possibility of what can happen after 10 years. Perhaps there will be nothing of the kind. Perhaps the people who become the leaders at that time will decide that the system is too costly to deploy and will give up the SDI. In any case, the world would welcome it if we could undertake to reduce nuclear weapons and not make this issue a stumbling block. We are asking not to give up SDI, and you are trying to determine now what will happen in 10 years.

Gorbachev. If we make a stipulation acknowledging the possibility of conducting research work relating to SDI within the confines of the laboratory, that will not mean that the American government will not be able to decide questions relating to the program. Such a stipulation will not prohibit research, development, and testing, including the kind that relates to space weapons. But it would make it possible to guarantee a strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty; it would make it possible to prevent bringing such weapons out of the laboratories, out in the atmosphere and into space. These are completely different things. We are talking about an agreement that is supposed to strengthen peace instead of subjecting it to new dangers.

Reagan. I'm not demanding the right to deploy ABMs in space, I'm only talking about research permitted by the ABM Treaty. By the way, the Soviet Union is not entirely without reproach in this. I'm referring to the Krasnoyarsk Radar Station. We have differing interpretations of the ABM Treaty, that's a fact.

Gorbachev. What we are talking about is seeing to it that SDI testing takes place only in the laboratory. We cannot go along with allowing it to come out in the atmosphere or into space. That is unacceptable to us. It is a question of principle.

Reagan. You're destroying all my bridges to continuation of my SDI program. I cannot go along with restrictions on the plan as you demand.

Gorbachev. In regard to laboratories. Is that your final position? If so, we can end our meeting at this point.

Reagan. Yes it is. The whole thing comes up against the fact that your side and our side differ as to what is permitted by the ABM Treaty and what is not.

Gorbachev. From our discussion I conclude that the U.S. wants to reserve the possibility of conducting tests of the SDI program not only in the laboratory but also outside, in the air and in space. If that's so, there can be no agreement between us.

Reagan. But you have to understand that experimentation and research cannot always be kept within the laboratory; sometimes it is simply necessary to go outside the laboratory.

Gorbachev. You must understand me. To us the laboratory issue is not a matter of stubbornness or hardheadedness. It is not casuistry. It is all too serious.

We are agreeing to deep reductions and, ultimately, the destruction of nuclear weapons. And at the same time, the American side is pushing us to agree to give them the right to create space weapons. That is unacceptable to us. If you will agree to restricting research work to the laboratory, not letting it out into space, I will be ready in two minutes to sign the appropriate formulation and adopt the document.

Reagan. I can't go along with that. You and I have different positions, different problems. In your country, nobody can criticize you without winding up in prison. In my country the situation is different. I have a lot of critics who wield great influence. And if I agree to such a formulation, they will launch a campaign against me; they will accuse me of breaking my promise to the people of the United States regarding SDI. So I pledge not to deploy the corresponding systems for 10 years, and to restrict ourselves to research permitted by the ABM Treaty. I'm not asking you for anything out of the ordinary.

Gorbachev. If I understand you, Mr. President, you are now addressing me in a trusting manner, as a man who occupies in his own country a position equal to yours. Therefore, I say to you frankly and in the same trusting manner: if we sign a package containing major concessions by the Soviet Union regarding fundamental problems, you will become, without exaggeration, a great president. You are now literally two steps from that. If we come to an agreement on strengthening the ABM regime, on complying strictly with the ABM Treaty and on laboratory research which will not rule out work within the SDI framework, it will mean our meeting has been a success. If not, then let's part at this point and forget about Reykjavik. But there won't be another opportunity like this. At any rate, I know I won't have one.

I firmly believed that we could come to an agreement. Otherwise I would not have raised the question of an immediate meeting with you; otherwise I would not have come here in the name of the Soviet leadership with a solid store of serious, compromising proposals. I hoped that they would meet with understanding and support from your side, that we could resolve all issues. If this does happen, if we manage to achieve deep reductions and the destruction of nuclear weapons, all of your critics will not dare open their mouths. They would then be going against the opinions of the overwhelming majority of people in the world, who would welcome our success. If, on the other hand, we are not able to come to an agreement, it will obviously become the job of another generation of leaders; you and I have no more time.

The American side has essentially not made any concessions, not a single major step to meet us halfway. It's hard to do business on that basis.

Shevardnadze. Let me speak very emotionally, because I feel that we have come very close to accomplishing this historic task. And when future generations read the record of our talks, they will not forgive us if we let this opportunity slip by.

Reagan. I want to say one thing to you as one political leader to another. I have a problem that is quite a substantial one for me. I am being subjected to

criticism which began even before I came here. They were saying that I would make concessions, that I would agree to a lengthy period of time of not withdrawing from the ABM Treaty. And so I ask you as a political leader to take one step which will substantially facilitate our relations and the solution to many questions for both of us. Let me say frankly that if I give you what you ask it will definitely hurt me badly at home.

Gorbachev. All right, then, let's end it here. What you propose is something we cannot go along with. I've said all I can.

Reagan. Are you really going to turn down a historic opportunity for agreement for the sake of one word in the text? It is clear from our own text that we will comply with the ABM Treaty for that entire period.

Gorbachev. You say that it's just a matter of one word. But it's not a matter of a word, it's a matter of principle. Obviously, if we undertake reductions, we will have to have secure logistics/rear services [*uverennyye tyly*]. We cannot agree to a situation in which you are expanding your SDI and going into space with it while reductions of nuclear weapons are going on.

If I go back to Moscow and say that despite our agreement on deep reductions of nuclear weapons, despite our agreement on the 10-year period, we have given the United States the right to test SDI in space so that the U.S. is ready to deploy it by the end of that period, they will call me a fool and irresponsible leader.

If you agree to restrict research to the laboratory, then there will be a framework, for 10 years you will have enough work to do research within the SDI framework and inside the laboratory. And you will be able to say that you are continuing the SDI, that you are not giving it up, if that is so essential to you for the American people.

To us this whole question is not a matter of prestige, I do not ascribe special importance to it; it is a question that touches upon the interests of our people.

Reagan. After our meeting in Geneva I was convinced that you and I had established personal contact of the kind the leaders of our two countries never had before. You and I understood each other very well. But now, when I have asked you a personal favor which would have enormous influence on our future relations, you have refused me.

Gorbachev. There are various kinds of favors. If you came to me and said that you were having trouble with your farmers, they were demanding increased grain purchases by the Soviet Union, that you were asking this as a personal favor, I could understand that. But I can't understand how you can ask the USSR to agree to grant the U.S. the right, during the period of deep reductions and elimination of nuclear weapons, to test a space ABM system in space, to implement SDI in its entirety, at the same time we were destroying our offensive nuclear potential. If you think about it, that wouldn't even be right for the U.S. It would create nervousness, a lack of trust, and is completely unacceptable to us. You don't need that kind of favor either.

Reagan. But if you don't have nuclear weapons, you won't have anything to threaten us with. The defensive system could not be deployed earlier than in 10

years' time, we have gone along with that deferment. As for the word "laboratory," it has its own particular meaning and subtext. They would simply tell me in that case that I had capitulated, that I had given away what I promised not to give away. All of the other formulations we have taken from you. We are saying we will comply with the ABM Treaty for 10 years. And now I see that nothing is coming of it, and all because of one word which has such specific meaning. I simply don't understand how you can think that I want to gain some special military advantage. After all, it's you, with your actions, who are violating the ABM Treaty. Yet we are not telling you to eliminate what you have. We're not setting that condition and we will not even mention it outside this room.

But now it's a matter of one word. Perhaps you will propose a different formulation? But the text now contains everything you have asked for—not to exercise the right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for 10 years, strict compliance with its provisions, and the conduct only of the kind of research, development, and testing which are permitted by the treaty.

For this reason I want to ask you once more to change your viewpoint, to do it as a favor to me so that we can go to the people as peacemakers.

Gorbachev. We cannot go along with what you propose. If you will agree to banning tests in space, we will sign the document in two minutes. We cannot go along with something else. We have already agreed to what we could; we are not to blame.

Even though our meeting is ending this way, I have a clear conscience before my people and before you. I have done everything I could.

Reagan. It's too bad we have to part this way. We were so close to an agreement. I think you didn't want to achieve an agreement anyway. I'm very sorry.

Gorbachev. I am also very sorry it's happened this way. I wanted an agreement and did everything I could, if not more.

Reagan. I don't know when we'll ever have another chance like this and whether we will meet soon.

Gorbachev. I don't either.

[Source: *FBIS-USR-93-121*. 20 September 1993. *Transcript of Gorbachev-Reagan Reykjavik Talks: Part 4*. 93WC0112A *MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZH-DUNARODNYYE OTNOSHENIYA* in Russian No 8. Aug 93 pp 68–78.]

Document No. 34: State Department: “Lessons of Reykjavik”

October 12, 1986

This remarkable, one-page State Department summary of the summit’s lessons seems to have been written on the last day of Reykjavik, given the mention of “today’s” discussions, but it leaves a dramatically positive impression of the summit in contrast to the leaders’ dour expressions as they left Hofdi House, as well as to Shultz’s downbeat presentation to the media immediately afterwards. It is unclear who authored this document, although it has an authoritative tone characteristic of Paul Nitze: “I have been pointing out these advantages [of thinking big] in a theoretical sense for some time.” The document, plus Gorbachev’s own very positive press briefing commentary, were included in Shultz’s briefing book for subsequent media appearances.

1. THINK BIG

Ambitious agreements have several advantages over marginal constraints:

- Sticky points become much more manageable, such as sublimits in START, proportionality of Asian reductions in INF. (A few, like shorter-range, become more important.
- They convey major benefits, which can more than offset the costs.
- Ambitious agreements need not be harder to negotiate than marginal agreements.
- While I have been pointing out these advantages in a theoretical sense for some time, the Reykjavik experience is the first experimental evidence that there is something to this idea.

2. BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

It is probably not a coincidence that the principal stumbling block today was a subject that we have been reluctant to address in detail in Geneva. The discussion of the meaning of the ABM Treaty was also poor in last night’s session, on a “Dick and Jane” level. (E.g., “Agreed Statement D cannot remove Article V.”) Other subjects were addressed in a much more sophisticated way. Reluctance to engage with the Soviets on [a] question does not generally make problems go away; more frequently the opposition senses weakness, which it tries [sic] to exploit.

3. INABILITY TO ANTICIPATE SOVIET MOVES

Reykjavik demonstrated once again how poor we are at guessing what the Soviets will do. The widespread prediction was that the Soviets would concentrate on INF and shun START, would hit hard on interim restraint, and press testing. Gorbachev was said to need a summit, and have trouble controlling his military. None of this was much in evidence. Arms control is an experimental science, and needs to be pursued by making suggestions that would be in our interest and observing the response.

4. THE VALUE OF LESS FORMAL SUMMITRY

Reykjavik and Vladivostok had much in common:

- short notice
- out-of-the-way place
- working format
- small team
- low expectations
- Vladivostok was an unexpected success
- Reykjavik came unexpectedly close to an unexpectedly ambitious agreement

The short notice did not hurt the preparation at all.

5. VALUE OF ENGAGING NEW PLAYERS

Gorbachev, Shevardnadze and Akhromeyev were all more useful

[Pages missing from original]

[Source: U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 35: Gorbachev's Thoughts on Reykjavik

October 12, 1986

Debriefing aides on the way back to Moscow, Gorbachev gives an upbeat assessment of the summit, proclaiming to be "even more of an optimist after Reykjavik." In particular, according to Chernyaev's notes from the plane ride and upon arrival in Moscow, Gorbachev values the "enormous experience" the Soviet side gained, including insights into Reagan's significant domestic problems and constraints on his ability to make decisions. Gorbachev now understands Reykjavik as signifying a new stage in the process of disarmament—from limitation to total abolition.

I regularly read foreign press, and I can feel a sense of the broad resonance that information about the Reykjavik summit has triggered. And the speculations started right away—who won over whom there. But that was not our goal going to Reykjavik. We had quite a significant reason for our initiative. The fact is that Geneva had reached a deadlock. We felt that a major breakthrough was needed, for time is working against the interests of humankind.

And now Reykjavik has gone by. As it turned out, it was quite easy to reach an understanding over the first and second points of our platform—the strategic weapons and the intermediate range missiles. That alone has given us enormous experience. We understood the President's problems, understood that he was not free in making his decisions. We did not make a tragedy out of the fact that the SDI problem prevented Reykjavik from becoming a total success. We thought, let the President think everything over; let him seek counsel from Congress. Perhaps we will need one more try to step over [the boundary] that still divides us. We can wait. We do not take back the proposals we brought to Reykjavik.

We need not fall into despair. Reykjavik led us to the most important stage of understanding of where we stand. Everybody saw that agreement is possible. From Reykjavik, we drew the conclusion that the necessity for dialogue has increased even more. That is why I am even more of an optimist after Reykjavik.

People ask whether the world has become safer after Reykjavik. In this question one needs precision of thought, no primitivism. In no sense would I call Reykjavik a failure. It is a step in a complicated and difficult dialogue, in a search for solutions. We must seek these solutions on a grand scale. We proposed to cut the whole "triad," each part, by 50 percent. And that already would have been a major achievement.

Some have tried to present the drama of Reykjavik (the situation was becoming quite dramatic) as if everything rested on one word, as if everything fell apart because of one word. No, it is a matter of principle. We made great concessions; but, we cannot agree to a concession that would jeopardize the security of our

state. I have already spoken twice about the results of Reykjavik, and not only in order to restore the truth, which was becoming distorted, but first and foremost in order to determine what to do from now on. I said it then and I am convinced of it now: the absence of success in Reykjavik is related to two major misconceptions, strategic in nature and characteristic of certain circles in the West.

The first is the thinking that the Russians are afraid of SDI and therefore will be ready for any concessions. And the second is the thinking that we are interested in disarmament more than the United States is. These attitudes affected the Reykjavik talks as well I sensed very soon what was expected of me—that I must lay precisely these cards on the table. Meanwhile, the President came without a specific program, merely to pick the fruit [and put it] into his basket. That is why the American partners so persistently pulled us toward the outcomes our delegations in Geneva spent so much time discussing fruitlessly. But we were in a decisive mood. We wanted to give a real, practical expression to those things on which we in principle agreed with Reagan in Geneva during our talks at the highest level. In other words, to give an impetus to the process of eliminating nuclear weapons. Really, before that, the conversation was only about limiting nuclear arms. Now it is about their reduction and liquidation. Since that is the case, we needed to close off all the roundabout ways that would allow one side to rise to superiority. That is why adherence to the ABM Treaty became the key point. The American side's position on this question clearly indicated that it has not renounced the goal of superiority. That is why they did not have enough character, responsibility, courage, or political decisiveness to step over this threshold—because that would have meant freeing themselves from dependency on the military-industrial complex.

Nevertheless, we are not giving it up as a lost cause. We proceeded from the assumption that Reykjavik would open more opportunities for everyone to understand what is going on: for the Europeans, the Americans, and for ourselves as well. It became quite clear to us that since the ABM and SDI are instruments for securing superiority, then we need a “package,” then everything is interconnected (*and we should not yet remove INF missiles from the strategic nuclear weapons talks. A.C.*). And let us not make pretenses: with this package we want to show the whole world—and in the first place the Europeans—that it is SDI that is the main obstacle to an agreement on nuclear disarmament.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2, Opis 2. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 36: Memorandum from Poindexter for the President:
“Why We Can’t Commit to Eliminating All Nuclear
Weapons within 10 Years”

October 16, 1986

This extraordinary memo from the national security adviser seeks to explain to his president “Why we can’t commit to eliminating all nuclear weapons within 10 years,” even though Reagan proposed exactly that at Reykjavik and talked about it proudly afterwards. This is the kind of damage control that White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, after Reykjavik, so famously compared to cleaning up after a parade of elephants. News of Reykjavik brought extraordinary push-back from the foreign policy establishment, from allies like Margaret Thatcher, and from Reagan’s own Joint Chiefs of Staff—all horrified at the idea of giving up nuclear deterrence. The memo’s core argument against Reagan’s abolitionist refrain is that the U.S. needs nuclear weapons to counter conventional imbalances; neither the United States nor its allies can afford “to upgrade our own and NATO’s conventional defenses sufficiently to have our security rest on conventional forces alone within 10 years.” What none of the U.S. officials involved in this walk-back from Reykjavik seems to understand is that Gorbachev is willing to ratchet down the conventional face-off as well. Among the many remarkable phrases from an aide to a president are these near the end of the memo: “I recognize that I am asking you to step back from an idea that did come up in Iceland. I also recognize that you may feel that you have committed to supporting this idea. However, I strongly feel that you should step back—and do so now.”

Purpose. Mr. President, my purpose in this note is to strongly recommend that you step back from any discussion of eliminating *all nuclear weapons* in 10 years, and focus attention on the proposals that you handed over to General Secretary Gorbachev in writing in Iceland which were focused on the elimination of all *offensive ballistic missiles* in 10 years. Further, I would recommend that you make no further public comment endorsing the idea of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons in 10 years as something discussed and agreed with the General Secretary. If asked, I would recommend that you stand firm by your long-term commitment to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but always cast this in terms of a long-term goal which will require the correction of existing conventional force imbalances and other conditions that require us to have the nuclear weapons in the first place.

Eliminating Ballistic Missiles. The idea of calling for the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles is not a new one. And although we had not previously considered suggesting that this be accomplished by 1996 (in 10 short years), it is a concept that we have studied carefully.

As you will remember, the idea of calling for the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles grew out of a proposal initially made by Cap Weinberger. He made it to you as we were working your last arms control letter to General Secretary Gorbachev. Cap suggested that it be coupled with the idea of sharing the benefits of advanced defenses.

The logic of this idea is simple and direct. Cap argued that it would make no sense to commit to share the benefits of advanced defenses with the Soviets if they insisted on continuing to possess large numbers of offensive ballistic missiles which would attempt to defeat our defenses. In short, why share the benefits of our research unless the Soviets showed a willingness to join us in making the transition to a more defense reliant world by reducing and ultimately eliminating offensive ballistic missiles.

The call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles was also consistent with what we were trying to do *both* in START and in INF, and also with the fundamental goal that you specifically set for the SDI program.

With respect to START, the call for the total elimination of all ballistic missiles is a logical extension of the position we have taken in the START negotiations that we must reduce and eliminate the unique threat posed by ballistic missiles. Our position has long been that while each side may need nuclear forces for some time to deter conflict and underwrite its security, neither side needs fast-flying, non-recallable offensive ballistic missiles for this purpose. From the very first, in START, we have been trying to draw a clear distinction between fast-flying ballistic systems, which are uniquely suited for an attempted first-strike by an aggressor, and slow-flying systems which are better suited for retaliation (less so for aggression). As a result, we have been attempting to focus on reductions in ballistic missile warheads as the heart of the issue to be resolved—and have treated slow-flying bombers largely to meet Soviet concerns.

In INF, we have taken a similar position. We have kept the focus on missiles, and avoided discussion of dual-capable, tactical aircraft. We proposed the zero-zero solution for the LRINF missile problem. We have called for the similar reduction and elimination of shorter-range ballistic missiles, missiles that pose as direct a threat to our Allies as Soviet ICBMs do to the United States.

With respect to SDI, your specific, stated goal was to make ballistic missiles obsolete, not to make all nuclear weapons obsolete. Here, again, your focus was on promptly eliminating the threat posed by these fast-flying missiles. You did discuss the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but you made it very clear that this step could only be taken if either the conventional balance of forces were corrected, or if the conditions of the world changed sufficiently so that the conventional force imbalance was not as a direct a threat as it is today and our requirements for nuclear weapons were removed.

After study and discussion, you incorporated the idea of proposing the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles into your letter to the General Secretary. We then consulted our Allies about this idea, and gained their support for it.

In Iceland, at the critical point of finding a response to Soviet concerns which neither compromised our principles or our security, we recommended that you draw upon this previous consensus and adapt this element (a call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles) into your response to the Soviet call for a 10 year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. By doing so, we undercut any Soviet objection to our having the right to deploy defenses as insurance, since we would have committed to wait until all offensive ballistic missiles of the two superpowers should have been eliminated anyway. By calling for the elimination of missiles of all ranges, we also, in one step, solved the problem of getting rid of both the last 100 Soviet SS-20 warheads in Asia (a concern of our Asian allies) and the remaining shorter-range INF missiles that still would threaten our European allies (a particular concern of Kohl).

It was for these reasons that we recommended to you, and you agreed and passed to the Soviets, the proposal calling for the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles in 10 years attached at *Tab A*. It was also for these reasons that we recommended to you, and you agreed and passed to the Soviets, a rejection of their attempt to alter this to a proposal for the elimination of all strategic forces (*Tab B*)—and instead went back to them with a second proposal that was altered in certain language but firm on the call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles (*Tab C*).

Under the recommended proposals, at the end of 10 years, when no offensive ballistic missiles exist, the US and the Soviet Union would still have up to 50% of today's strategic nuclear offensive force levels, although they would now be concentrated in slow-flying systems (bombers and cruise missiles). This would provide a modest strategic retaliatory force to deter attack on the US and conventional aggression against our allies throughout the world until our conventional forces could be upgraded and our air defenses put in place. It would keep a US nuclear umbrella, although a quite smaller one, over NATO. We would also still have some nuclear weapons in battlefield systems like artillery and in our dual-capable fighter aircraft that could hold Soviet tank concentrations at risk. Thus, keeping some nuclear forces would offset the great Soviet advantage in conventional forces that exists threatening NATO. These were the very significant reasons behind our recommendations to you that you reject any Soviet attempts to shift the proposal from the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles to either the elimination of all strategic forces or the total elimination of nuclear weapons in 10 years.

Eliminating All Nuclear Weapons. In your speech announcing the SDI program in March, 1983, you called for a future nuclear free world. Prior to finalizing that speech, as you will recall, we had a series of discussions about the fact that until regional conventional force imbalances could be corrected, such a step was simply not possible—and, therefore, the main thrust of the SDI program announced in your speech, and the specific objective given to that program by you was not to make nuclear weapons obsolete, but to make ballistic missiles obsolete.

In January, 1986, General Secretary Gorbachev proposed a plan for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. You will remember that we very carefully studied the plan, and reached the conclusion that while we agreed with the ultimate goal, that such a step could only be taken if we were confident that we had other means to offset Soviet conventional force advantages. You responded to the General Secretary's proposal along these lines. Nothing has changed since that time.

The Conventional Imbalance. Given the differences in the size of conventional forces that exist today, and the military requirements we face, it is very unlikely that we could take the actions to improve our conventional force capabilities needed to permit us to do without some nuclear weapons within the next ten years. Our allies face the same problem, and many have made it clear that they do not support any move in this direction for this very practical reason. Thus, both US and Allied security require at least some nuclear weapons be retained for the foreseeable future.

[Excised paragraph]

The Impact on US/Allied Military Strategy. If we could put aside for the moment the nuclear forces of the UK, France and China—and others who could become nuclear powers like India, Israel, Pakistan, South Africa, etc.—we should also consider the situation we would face if the types of proposals discussed above were implemented.

Eliminating all offensive ballistic missiles would push us back to a condition similar to that which we faced in the 1950s. A limited number of nuclear weapons would exist, largely deliverable by aircraft.

In terms of military tactics, the existence of these remaining nuclear weapons would mean that an aggressor could not mass his forces in any one place in the hope of breaking through conventional defenses because he could not be sure that nuclear weapons would not be used to destroy these forces when they are massed. The fact that the threat of nuclear attack prevents an aggressor from massing his conventional forces without risk makes modern conventional weapons more effective, giving them the chance to handle the threat they face since the existence of nuclear weapons means that the aggressor can't simply mass forces and overwhelm positions with force of numbers.

In terms of strategy, the existence of these weapons (too slow to be used to surprise and defeat retaliatory forces, but still well suited for a retaliatory mission) would still raise the price of aggression to a level high enough that it could help deter aggression.

Eliminating all nuclear weapons (once again ignoring the forces of the UK, France, China and others for simplicity) would push us back to a situation that existed on the eve of WW II—with the peace dependent upon the assessment of an aggressor of the relative strength of his conventional forces alone. However, instead of the Panzer divisions that Hitler had at his disposal, we would face the challenge posed by the combined arms capability of the Soviet army. It simply is not clear that we can take the steps necessary to upgrade our own and NATO's

conventional defenses sufficiently to have our security rest on conventional forces alone within 10 years. If we cannot, then the Soviet ability to coerce our allies—to Finlandize other nations—will increase, and our security decrease, as a result of the premature elimination of all nuclear weapons.

While our allies certainly are not happy having their security tied to the use of nuclear weapons to offset conventional forces, and the prospect of nuclear war in Europe is unacceptable to them, so is the alternative if they are faced with added expense for conventional forces and all they get as a result of that added expense is the replacement of the potential for nuclear war in Europe with the potential of an equally devastating high-tech replay of WW II.

Verification. Finally, we can't ignore that others have nuclear weapons. The elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles will be difficult to verify, but it is likely to be child's play compared to verifying the elimination of all nuclear weapons. In addition, the need for verification will be enormous since if we believe we are living in a nuclear free world and suddenly someone demonstrates that they have a covert nuclear stockpile, their ability to coerce this great nation would be immense. This, alone, is a fundamental reason for moving much more slowly on the path towards an agreement *now* on the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Bottom Line. All this being so, the main point of this memorandum is simply that neither our military experts or our allies would support the idea of moving to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons within 10 years.

They can likely support a goal of the elimination of all ballistic missiles in that period. The elimination of offensive ballistic missiles would remove not only the nuclear threat posed by such weapons, but the chemical threat as well. It would also enhance our conventional capability by removing the direct threat of rocket attack against our conventional forces, our airfields, the sites where we store the tanks and vehicles that our troops coming from the US in a crisis which would reinforce NATO reinforcements coming from the US would need in a crisis. It would make the planning of a quick disarming first strike by a conventional aggressor much more difficult.

Recommendations. Based on all of the above, Mr. President, I would strongly recommend that:

- (1) you step back from any discussion of eliminating *all nuclear weapons* in 10 years, and focus attention on the proposals that you handed over to General Secretary Gorbachev in writing in Iceland which were focused on the elimination of *all offensive ballistic missiles* in 10 years;
- (2) you make no further public comment endorsing the idea of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons in 10 years as something discussed and agreed with the General Secretary; and
- (3) if asked about such discussions or your position on this, I would recommend that you stand firm by your long-term commitment to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but always cast this

in terms of a long-term goal which will require the correction of existing conventional force imbalances and other conditions that require us to have the nuclear weapons in the first place.

We have a good, consistent position in our proposal to reduce by 50% the existing strategic nuclear arsenals and then to totally eliminate all offensive ballistic missiles. We can be reasonably assured that our military can support this, that our allies can support this, and that our security requirements can support this. We have adjusted your recent report to the nation to reflect this approach, and it was well received. We have explained this position to the Congress, our allies, and the American people—and it was well received.

I recognize that I am asking you to step back from an idea that did come up in Iceland. I also recognize that you may feel that you have committed to supporting this idea. However, I strongly feel that you should step back—and do so now.

Once you have read this memorandum, I am prepared to discuss this with you in whatever detail that you desire. I would ask that if you disagree with the recommendations I have made, that you give me the opportunity to explain them in person to you before you address this subject publicly.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request MO2-016 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 37: Memorandum from Shultz for the President:
“Visit of UK Prime Minister Thatcher”

November 12, 1986

Word that Reagan and Gorbachev proposed eliminating all nuclear weapons at Reykjavik set off a storm of reaction among conventional thinkers across the political spectrum. Public figures from former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to respected defense expert Senator Sam Nunn protested the radical departure from deterrence. Most concerned of all were the European allies who had taken so much domestic political heat for decisions like the deployment of Pershing missiles in 1983, which the Reagan administration had pushed for so vigorously. Margaret Thatcher wrote in her memoir that Reykjavik made her feel “as if there had been an earthquake beneath my feet.”

German Chancellor Kohl reached Washington first. Arriving on October 21, he won reassurance that Soviet conventional arms superiority in Europe was as important to Washington’s agenda as nuclear reductions. Next came Thatcher, on November 15, whose visit is the focus of this insightful briefing memo from Shultz to Reagan. The secretary of state summarizes some of the major political difficulties facing the British leader after Reykjavik. Discussions at the summit, he writes, undermined Thatcher’s own priority of acquiring Trident nuclear ballistic missile submarines, and made the opposition Labour Party’s disarmament agenda look “respectable.” To make up for it, Reagan would invite Thatcher to Camp David to underline the “special relationship.” He even met her helicopter in his golf cart and chauffeured the Iron Lady personally to Aspen Lodge, where he reassured her of his enduring anti-Soviet core. Afterwards, Thatcher (not Reagan) would give the press briefing, restoring, to her satisfaction, the credibility of nuclear deterrence.

I. THE STANDING OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

- Mrs. Thatcher remains our best and closest friend in Europe and has continued to demonstrate her strong and decisive leadership in domestic and foreign affairs.
- Her situation at home on both domestic and foreign policy issues is, however, not as secure as it was when she last met with you at Camp David in December 1984.
- The UK is now in a pre-election phase in anticipation that Mrs. Thatcher will call elections sometime in 1987, although her mandate runs to June 1988.
- From a landslide victory in 1983 which left the opposition virtually prostrate, the Tories have found themselves struggling to keep pace with an invigorated Labor Party.

- Labor had been leading in public opinion polls, but last week two polls showed the Conservatives had regained a small lead. Nevertheless, it remains distinctly possible that Labor could win enough seats in the next election to form the government.
- On the economic front, Mrs. Thatcher finds herself vulnerable due to the high level of unemployment, 11.6%. However, a small drop in September may indicate the start of a downward trend.
- Overall the economy is behaving rather well. Growth this year will be in the two percent range, with many predicting brighter prospects next year. Inflation is at its lowest rate in 20 years—three percent.

Arms Control/East-West Relations

- Uppermost in Mrs. Thatcher's mind will be her concerns that U.S. proposals on arms reductions have diverged from UK positions and that they undercut her politically. She will seek to bring UK and U.S. positions on security issues closer together again.
- Her positions on defense and security issues have not changed but the UK party conferences and the proposals discussed at Reykjavik have changed the landscape around her considerably since she first proposed this meeting.
- In September the Labor Party ratified a defense program based on unilateral nuclear disarmament and the Liberal/SDP Alliance was unable to agree on a coherent security policy. This left the Tories as the only defenders of nuclear deterrence, an advantage they looked forward to exploiting in the coming elections.
- The extraordinary progress made in Reykjavik, specifically the proposal to eliminate offensive ballistic missiles within ten years, however, undercuts Mrs. Thatcher's commitment to deploy Trident nuclear ballistic missiles within the same time frame and tends to make the Labor Party's position respectable.
- While Mrs. Thatcher is willing to support us on INF and on the 50% reduction in strategic systems over five years with "slight reservations" and is supportive on SDI research, she fears the ten-year proposal to eliminate offensive ballistic missiles will destabilize European security, put in question the UK Trident program, and undermine her election chances.
- Ironically, instead of being securely in your corner on security and arms control, she finds herself and the UK Trident program attacked in Parliament by Neil Kinnock and the left for being out of step with your far-reaching arms reduction proposals.
- Mrs. Thatcher did not agree with your decision on interim restraint and may ask that the U.S. remain technically within the SALT limits.

[...]

II. WHAT DO WE WANT

- To obtain Mrs. Thatcher's understanding of and support for all parts of your arms control objectives, including SDI research, the zero-zero INF solution for Europe and the elimination of offensive ballistic missiles within the ten-year time frame discussed at Reykjavik.
- To indicate our strong support for Mrs. Thatcher and HMG policies on defense, specifically nuclear modernization and increased expenditures for defense.
- In doing so, to ensure that she returns to London stronger politically and reassured about the direction of our policies.
- To obtain British agreement to continuing strong measures against international terrorism, particularly in the Middle East and particularly against Syria, and for lining up international support for such measures.
- To review proposals on the Middle East and to keep open question of providing military aircraft to Argentina.

III. WHAT DOES MRS. THATCHER WANT

- Generally to strengthen her pre-election position by bringing U.S. and UK positions on arms control into harmony.
- To obtain a strong U.S. endorsement of HMG's positions on defense and nuclear weapons, specifically the continuing need for Tridents, nuclear weapons, and offensive ballistic missiles as long as a non-nuclear imbalance exists in Europe.
- To be seen as an important player in U.S. and Alliance decision making on arms control/defense issues and to demonstrate that you value Mrs. Thatcher's counsel on crucial strategic issues and that she and her government have influenced U.S. policy.
- To obtain assurance that we will consult with her and other NATO leaders as we pursue our new arms control agenda and that we will take account of European concerns about the Soviet conventional advantage in Europe.
- To obtain commitment of continued U.S. support for UK lead role in lining up European/EC measures against Syria.

IV. WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED FROM THIS VISIT

- Strengthen Alliance cohesion and support by reconciling your commitment to eliminate offensive ballistic missiles within ten years with Mrs. Thatcher's commitment to deploy UK Tridents within the same time frame.
- Similarly, to find a mutually acceptable formula that addresses Mrs. Thatcher's insistence that drastic nuclear reductions such as the elimination of offensive ballistic missiles are inadvisable as long as conventional and chemical weapon imbalances exist in Europe.

- Obtain restatement of strong British support for our positions on INF, SDI, and strategic nuclear reductions.
- Combine these understandings in a strong agreed press treatment of US/UK unity on arms control matters supportive of U.S. positions and Mrs. Thatcher's standing in the UK.
- Endorse a common, concerted approach toward Syria.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA S98-004 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 38: Notes from the Conference with Politburo Members and Secretaries of the Central Committee

December 1, 1986

In this Politburo discussion about Reagan's decision to "abandon" the SALT II Treaty, Gorbachev angrily states that the Americans are not doing anything in the spirit of Reykjavik and that the Reagan administration's recent actions (the SALT II ceiling had just been breached by adding one additional B-52 bomber to the U.S. Air Force) is related to the domestic political crisis over Iran-contra. Yegor Ligachev agrees with Gorbachev that after Reykjavik the Soviet positions have only become stronger. Gorbachev disparages the U.S. administration—"We are dealing with political scum"—but also complains bitterly about his own generals, who are "hissing among themselves" against his disarmament proposals.

Gorbachev. Regarding Reagan's decision to abandon SALT II. We anticipated such an action. But to do such a thing after Reykjavik! This discredits their own policy. "Irangate" pushed them to do it in order to save the President. I said in India that it was a mistake. But our reaction should also come on the government-to-government level, because we are talking here about a dangerous change of policy. He is acting in order to please the right wing, the military-industrial complex, which is going head-on.

They want to put us in this situation at the negotiating table in Geneva. We should seriously assess this action. Destructive policy should be called destructive policy: not only are they not doing anything in the spirit of Reykjavik, but they are removing all brakes from the arms race. We need a government statement... And a letter to the Congress from the foreign [affairs] commission of our Supreme Soviet. We are expected to provide not only a statement, but also a position. We will not announce that any further negotiations are senseless. But it is not yet time to refuse to adhere to SALT II. Even though we have everything ready for it. It would play into the hands of precisely the kind of people who disrupt negotiations and brush off public opinion. If we do this now, they will say that the Soviets were simply waiting for it to happen. The Chinese have already taken the bait—saying that they were right in claiming that the "superpowers" are playing their own game.

We should use all political means to compel Reagan to return to SALT II. It is at a very difficult stage. We should react on a big scale, but within the boundaries of a political struggle. On our side, we should not further provoke an arms race. This approach is justified. Reykjavik has confirmed that coming out with positive proposals is highly beneficial for us.

We are getting through not only to the European public, but also to the American public. There is great interest in the U.S.—lines for meetings with our cinematographers, for Moiseyev (dance ensemble), for Svetlanov (symphony orchestra), for our children's delegations. They have felt it at the top—in the White House and in the Pentagon. It is not just a coincidence that subscriptions to *Soviet Life* are being curtailed, and that the FBI has become interested in subscribers. They are afraid. They are practicing the tactics of silencing information about our major speeches and statements. But there are forces in the United States that want to bring in the Soviet viewpoint. Therefore, we should not look at America as only black and white.

The group headed by Zaikov⁸⁴ should give us a detailed analysis of what is going on in America in the sphere of armaments and about the prospects for disarmament.

We should not allow ourselves to get tired. A political leadership has no right to do this. We are obligated to calculate all of our steps—political, diplomatic and cultural—with precision. We should not exclude the possibility that, as a result of the reaction to Reykjavik and to “Irangate,” the administration might undertake a risky venture in either Nicaragua or Syria in order to halt our peaceful advance. We are dealing with political scum. One can expect anything from them. We hate it, but we need to stay cool-headed. It is necessary and possible to influence the United States indirectly, via other forces, and especially via Western Europe. We should conduct affairs in a business-like manner.

Even with the sharpest presentations, the overall tendency in our assessment of the situation should be optimistic, not hopeless.

Dobrynin. The U.S. is experiencing a crisis of political leadership, of the administration. The Reagan administration's policy is not trusted—there has never been so much criticism of a President.

Gorbachev. Still, we have to act in a decent manner. I had a chance to attack Reagan at the press conference in Delhi, but I didn't. [...]

Ligachev. Reykjavik significantly strengthened our position. We came out of Reykjavik stronger. The U.S. position got weaker—even if there were no Irangate or congressional elections. All because Irangate was perpetrated by people who were biding their time. We should start from the position of strength that we achieved at Reykjavik. [...]

Vorotnikov. International problems. The fact that we made significant concessions was well received and it showed our true intentions. However, we should not make any further concessions. They would think that pressure from Washington is working.

Gorbachev. You probably understand that we have not made any concessions. It is the generals who are trying to scare us—they are afraid that they would have

⁸⁴ Lev Zaikov, secretary of the CC CPSU for the defense industry. [Editors]

nothing to do. There is enough work left for four or five generations of generals. We have not made any concessions—not one step.

Vorotnikov. We should not step away from Reykjavik.

Gorbachev. I know, [the generals] are already hissing among themselves: “what kind of leadership do we have? They are disarming the country.”

Yes, in Reykjavik our proposals sounded like concessions. But in reality, they are not concessions in the least.

Vorotnikov. That’s what the people think. ...

Gorbachev. They say that [Marshal Nikolay] Ogarkov is very upset. In his opinion, the more [armaments] the better. Cannons should be longer. He gets 1,200 rubles a month, and he still growls. Meanwhile, 25 million people live below the official poverty level.

They used to tell us that the United States was in a state of crisis. But it seems like there is no crisis there. There are crises and then there are crises.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Chapter 3

THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT, 1987

The Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Washington in December 1987 produced the substantive high point of all their meetings—the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty eliminating a whole class of nuclear weapons. The ceremony took place at the exact time determined by Nancy Reagan’s astrologer, and the senior diplomatic correspondent Don Oberdorfer described the signing as “a spectacular public performance broadcast live around the world.”¹ Yet the declassified documents behind the summit reveal that the superpowers left on the table even more substance than INF, which would require a lot of catching up later under the Bush administration. Truly transformative offers including reductions of strategic weapons, conventional forces, even chemical and biological weapons, were available from the Soviet side, but the U.S. just was not prepared—in the wake of the Iran-contra scandal and entering Reagan’s last year in office—to accept what Gorbachev was offering.²

As early as February 1987, according to senior CIA analyst Douglas MacEachin, the sequence of arms reduction proposals and concessions made by the Soviets was nothing short of astounding. The Geneva summit’s idea of 50 percent cuts in missiles followed by Reykjavik’s discussion of nuclear abolition within 10 years then set the stage for success in abolishing intermediate-range missiles, the so-called “zero-zero option” originally proposed by U.S. hard-liners primarily because they were sure the Soviets would never give up their weapons. MacEachin commented, “Even more damaging to those who thought the answer to zero-zero was going to be a forever ‘no,’ we also got a ‘yes’ to intrusive on-site inspections. This was a new era.”³

The INF Treaty was the most that Gorbachev would ever get until it was too late for him to really deliver from the Soviet side. He wanted not just the zero option on INF in 1987, but an “arms race in reverse.” Yet Washington’s poverty of imagination plus opposition from hard-liners (especially the U.S. military services) prevented any further progress. The new thinking from Moscow was perhaps most evident when the Soviets proposed—to the shock of the Americans—far more intrusive on-site inspections and verifications than the U.S. military

¹ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, p. 258.

² See Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., “The INF Treaty and the Washington Summit: 20 Years Later,” *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 238*, posted December 10, 2007 at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB238/

³ Douglas MacEachin, Musgrove transcript, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 54.

services would agree to. When Marshal Akhromeyev offered during the Washington summit to allow on-site counting of bombs deployed on each bomber, it was the American negotiator, Paul Nitze, who demurred.⁴ Similarly, at the Washington summit, when Gorbachev introduced the idea of major conventional cuts along with a mutual ban on chemical weapons and both sides ending their arms flows into Central America (supposedly a long-time goal of Reagan policy), the American negotiators were completely unprepared, as was Reagan himself, and Gorbachev's initiatives went unanswered—only one hand was clapping.⁵

There were many reasons in 1987 for policy stasis in Washington, but one of the most important centered on the persisting disbelief among American Cold Warriors that Gorbachev represented anything really new. For example, one of the top U.S. intelligence analysts on the Soviet Union, Robert Gates (then deputy director of the CIA, who subsequently failed upwards to positions as high as secretary of defense), wrote a memo forwarded to the president and top Cabinet officials just before the Washington summit that took a view of Gorbachev almost 180 degrees from reality. Gates predicted that Gorbachev's reforms were only intended to provide "breathing space" before a "further increase in Soviet military power and political influence"; that Gorbachev would only agree to arms deals "that protect existing Soviet advantages" and undermine "Alliance cohesion"; and that Gorbachev remained committed to Third World adventures.⁶ (Just three months later, the Soviets would announce the pullout from Afghanistan.)

So the road to success at the Washington summit twisted and turned during 1987, with most of the new developments appearing on the Soviet side. All the way through the nationally broadcast congressional hearings during the summer of 1987 on the Iran-contra scandal, the Reagan administration remained preoccupied with the possibility of impeachment and continually on the defensive about revelations of dysfunctional White House decision-making. Cartoonists depicted Reagan and his staff as rambunctious kids in a kindergarten lacking adult supervision. Presidential approval ratings had crashed at the end of 1986—the largest one-month drop ever recorded—after Iran-contra broke, and would stay below 50 percent until the Washington summit success. Iran-contra had ended the careers of several top Reagan aides, including the national security adviser (John Poindexter) and the White House chief of staff (Donald Regan). High-level turnover combined with damage-control thinking and post-Reykjavik fallout from allies and the foreign policy establishment to preclude any serious attention to arms control, much less any new initiative, on Washington's part. We can add this kind of blinkered thinking to the list of reasons that Jack Matlock later recorded when he lamented: "we could have gotten a START agreement and other things

⁴ Document No. 47.

⁵ For a detailed account based on comparing and contrasting the various memoirs, see FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 427–439.

⁶ Robert M. Gates, Memorandum, "Gorbachev's Gameplan: The Long View," November 24, 1987, U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.

in 1988” had it not been for Iran-contra and the resulting turnover of staff in the White House, and the administration’s focus on scandal management.⁷

In Moscow, in the early months of 1987, the Soviets faced a tough question—whether to make even more concessions to energize the negotiating process, or to accept the failure of their Reykjavik program. At Reykjavik, the Soviet side had agreed to leave the British and French nuclear weapons out of the equation, and accepted the idea of cuts in, or even the complete elimination of, medium-range ballistic missiles in the Asian portion of the USSR. This significant and unanticipated change in position in effect meant the complete acceptance of the original U.S. proposal for a “zero option.” However, the Ministry of Defense—represented by Akhromeyev—had agreed to that solution at Reykjavik only as part of a compromise that firmly linked intermediate-range weapons with the strategic and space issues, including adherence to the ABM Treaty and limits on SDI, all to be negotiated as a package.⁸ The U.S. side rejected such linkage, and argued for negotiating INF as a separate agreement. Therefore, to make any progress toward their top priority—a comprehensive START Treaty that would cut strategic arms in half across the strategic triad while Reagan was still president—Gorbachev and his aides realized they would have to revisit the package deal and focus on just those parts, like INF, where agreement was more likely.

Aiding this realization, by early 1987, was a significant change in the perception of SDI on the part of Gorbachev and his close associates. Fears of SDI as a potential first strike weapon from space, which Gorbachev had tried to explain to Reagan over and over at Geneva and Reykjavik, by now had faded. Part of this change was due to the influence of progressive Soviet scientists, like academicians Evgeny Velikhov and Roald Sagdeev, who did not believe in the technological feasibility of the SDI concept. The Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences provided a political analysis of the SDI discourse and history of the program in the United States and came to the conclusion that the program would receive significantly less attention and funding in the next administration. Andrey Kokoshin, author of the study, pointed to significant opposition in Congress (noting especially the views of Sam Nunn, chair of the Armed Services Committee), and even among the military, to SDI, and suggested the Soviet leadership should be less worried about it.⁹ Perhaps even more important, the perception of threat from the United States was giving way to a new sense of trust and productive cooperation emerging from the two previous summits, which promised important payoffs in the future.

⁷ Jack Matlock, Musgrove transcript, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 55.

⁸ Document No. 30. Information about the position of the Defense Ministry provided by Colonel-General Chervov in an interview, Moscow, June 15, 1996.

⁹ Andrey Kokoshin, “O razvitiu nashei pozitsii na peregovorakh po YaKV” [About the development of our position at the NST negotiations], Katayev collection, Hoover Institution, Box 7, Folder 6.

In January 1987, Gorbachev pushed simultaneously on two fronts to advance *perestroika*. Domestically, the Communist Party Plenum concentrated on political reform and democratization and scheduled a CPSU conference to address those issues in summer 1988. In foreign policy, to preserve and strengthen the momentum of Reykjavik, Gorbachev convened an international forum titled “For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity,” which focused on the threat of nuclear weapons and the need for deep reductions on the road to their complete elimination. Academician Andrei Sakharov, recently released from exile, was permitted to speak at the forum. Many participants, including Sakharov, called for swift progress on arms control even if this meant negotiating on INF separately.¹⁰ Sakharov also privately met with two American scientists and talked about the need to untie the strategic arms control package and to stop allowing SDI to be the major stumbling block in negotiations.¹¹ Gorbachev had called on his Politburo to “stop being afraid of SDI” as early as March 1986, but it took him almost a year to follow his own advice. Untying the arms control package was a very sensitive political issue, since it amounted to a unilateral concession, and it took a great deal of internal discussion and an impassioned memorandum from Yakovlev on February 25, 1987, before Gorbachev would make the decision.¹²

Ironically, the argument contained in the Yakovlev memorandum that finally persuaded Gorbachev alluded mainly to the U.S. domestic political agenda. Yakovlev argued that considering the strength of the right wing in the Republican Party and the upcoming presidential elections, if Gorbachev was counting on signing a major strategic arms control treaty while Reagan was still in power, he would have to sign a separate INF accord as soon as possible. On February 26, 1987, the Politburo made the historic decision to untie the package as a means to jumpstart negotiations, and to invite George Shultz to Moscow in April. Following Gromyko’s lead, all the Politburo members present spoke in favor of separating the talks, including Yegor Ligachev and Defense Minister Sergey Sokolov, who would later criticize the INF Treaty as concessionary. Both Shevardnadze and Gorbachev echoed Yakovlev’s second argument about timing and relating the decision to the need to restore trust in European public opinion after the resumption of Soviet nuclear tests.¹³ Gorbachev made the formal announcement on February 28. It was received with concern among the Soviet military, who

¹⁰ Frances FitzGerald goes so far as to credit Sakharov’s speech at the forum with “breaking the spell” of the package, but internal Soviet documents point to other key players in the ultimate decision.

¹¹ Record of conversation between Sakharov, Jeffrey Stone and Frank von Hippel, circa February 14, 1987, Russian Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Fond 89, Perechen’ 18, Delo 114.

¹² Document No. 39.

¹³ Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, p. 147.

viewed it as caving in to Reagan's demands, but nobody was willing to openly oppose the general secretary at first.¹⁴

At this point, preparations for a successful INF summit became the foreign policy priority of the Soviet government. Just as in the period before Reykjavik, Gorbachev understood he needed to take serious steps to accommodate U.S. interests, perhaps even invoking the hated word "concessions." The test of his seriousness would come during the April 1987 Shultz visit. In preparation, in late March the Soviets announced radical new proposals on verification, basically introducing the principle of "anytime anywhere," which went well beyond what the U.S. side was proposing or willing to accept at the time. April brought with it even more rethinking and redefinition of Soviet positions on foreign policy. Two key events on the eve of Shultz's trip were Margaret Thatcher's visit to Moscow and Gorbachev's visit to Prague. During Thatcher's stay, she accused the Soviet leader of exporting communism to Third World countries and explained to him how the Soviet military posture in Europe, combined with the memories of 1956 and 1968, conveyed a sense of threat to the Europeans.¹⁵ Gorbachev was moved by her explanation and mentioned it repeatedly in Politburo discussions of Soviet and Warsaw Pact military doctrine. The Prague visit marked the start of "Gorbymania" in Eastern Europe, where local reformers and populations hoped to appeal to Gorbachev over the heads of their own conservative leaderships. But to the Soviet leader, the visit suggested that the days of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe were numbered and that he would have to confront the issue of succession in the allied countries very soon. In a way these two visits helped Gorbachev tackle the upcoming negotiations with Shultz in a more decisive and even radical mode. Some of the views expressed by Thatcher also found their way into Soviet thinking in a most striking way—on May 30, the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee meeting in Berlin adopted a new defensive military doctrine that called for restructuring their forces in Europe. The new doctrine was pushed through by Gorbachev and presented to the Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff on May 18 in Moscow.¹⁶ This significant change in Soviet posture contributed positively to the atmosphere of preparations for the summit.

The upcoming trip by the secretary of state scheduled for mid-April was almost derailed by an unfolding espionage scandal. It was widely reported that the KGB had penetrated the American Embassy in Moscow and was trying to bug the new building under construction. Serious opposition to Shultz's planned trip bubbled up in Congress and among highly visible members of the political class, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. However, Reagan's

¹⁴ Interview with General-Colonel Anatoly Gribkov, November 13, 1996, Moscow.

¹⁵ Gorbachev-Thatcher memcon, March 30, 1987, in Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., "The Thatcher-Gorbachev Conversations," *National Security Archive electronic briefing book No. 422*, April 13, 2013, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB422/>.

¹⁶ Mastny and Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle?*, Document Nos. 122, 123, pp. 559–570.

belief in the value of direct contacts won out and he encouraged Shultz to go to Moscow.¹⁷

The Shevardnadze-Shultz and then Gorbachev-Shultz meetings on April 13 and 14 covered all four items on the U.S. agenda—human rights, regional conflicts, arms control and bilateral relations. Shevardnadze especially was open to discussion of human rights and regional conflicts. In addition, Shultz was able to meet with Prime Minister Nikolay Ryzhkov and have a detailed discussion of the Soviet economy and prospects for reform. (In his conversation with Gorbachev Shultz called this meeting “one of the most interesting conversations of all my meetings with Soviet leaders.”¹⁸) Just like Thatcher two weeks earlier, Shultz was given the opportunity to discuss U.S. policy on Soviet TV in a long and detailed interview. In every sense it was a breakthrough visit that raised Shultz’s spirits and his determination to conclude the INF Treaty by the end of the year.

However, during the meetings, a sense of bitterness lingered on the Soviet side for what was seen as the Reagan administration’s retreat from Reykjavik and a lack of clarity on what had actually been agreed there. Firing off one idea after another, Gorbachev tried hard to push for an agreement on INF and shorter-range nuclear forces (SRINF). When Shultz argued for the U.S. right to match the number of Soviet weapons in that class deployed in Europe, Gorbachev responded that they could indeed match—but at zero—raising the issue of eliminating SRINF, including tactical nuclear weapons.

At a meeting with a U.S. congressional delegation led by House Speaker Jim Wright, Gorbachev reiterated his feeling that opportunities were being lost, blaming the Reagan administration for failing to take advantage of his offers and observing that the opportunities now were “better than at any time since World War II.”¹⁹ On April 22, in his meeting with Wojciech Jaruzelski, Gorbachev detailed a proposal on zero INF in Europe and to start negotiations on such weapons in Asia and on U.S. territory. On April 27, the Soviet delegation tabled a double-zero proposal in Geneva, which included a strict verification regime.²⁰

For the Soviet side, the most controversial development in the entire INF negotiations was Gorbachev and Shevardnadze’s decision to agree to the U.S. demand to consider the SS-23/Oka tactical missile with a tested range of 400km (well under the 500km stipulated by the treaty) as part of the treaty. By fall 1987 the issue produced the first real break between the Soviet political and the military leaderships. Even Akhromeyev, Gorbachev’s major supporter in the military and the author of many disarmament initiatives himself, expressed strong opposition. According to General Nikolay Detinov, a member of the “small five,” an interagency group staffing arms control positions for the Politburo, the Big Five (the Politburo Commission on Nuclear and Conventional Arms Control

¹⁷ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 254–257.

¹⁸ Document No. 40.

¹⁹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 260.

²⁰ Savel’yev and Detinov, *The Big Five*, p. 131.

consisting of the minister of defense, foreign minister, head of the KGB, head of the Military-Industrial Commission, and head of the International Department of the Central Committee) discussed the issue and the “arms control principals ... decided to object categorically to the inclusion” of the Oka in a future treaty.²¹ They did indeed, but were overruled by the political leadership. In his memoir, Akhromeyev puts particular blame on the foreign minister.²²

Shevardnadze agreed in principle to including shorter-range missiles in the systems to be counted under the INF Treaty during his talks with Shultz on April 13. Gorbachev confirmed this concession during his meeting with the secretary of state the following day, under pressure from Shultz, who insisted that if the Soviet Union did not count the SS-23 as having a range of more than 500 kilometers, the United States would have to deploy similar systems in Europe.²³ Throughout the meeting Gorbachev repeatedly accused the American side of forcing the Soviets to make more concessions and failing to treat the USSR as a great power, to which Shultz famously responded: “I’m weeping for you.”²⁴

The concession on the Oka was made possible only by sidestepping the military and isolating them from the decision. According to Kornienko, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze intentionally did not invite Akhromeyev, who would normally be present at all INF meetings in his capacity as a top arms control negotiator. He was invited to the meeting only after the concession had been made, as the talks turned to the unresolved issues of START. He was not informed of the Oka decision, but the next day’s press coverage made it appear as if he had been present for the entire discussion and therefore must have approved of the inclusion of the SS-23.²⁵

This is also the impression Shevardnadze gave in his memoir, responding to the criticism of his “concessionary position” on INF, and the Oka missile in particular:

Why don’t the deputies from the Soyuz Group for example, ask not just me, as they are so zealously doing, but Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, a man I respect, about the reasons for dismantling the Oka Missile Compound? He sat next to the General Secretary during the negotiations about this class of weapons. Surely a Marshal would know much better than I, who gave their consent to this and why, as he would also know that without the consent of the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff such a decision would not have been made.²⁶

²¹ Savel’yev and Detinov, *The Big Five*, p. 133.

²² Akhromeyev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 131.

²³ Document No. 40.

²⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 894.

²⁵ Akhromeyev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, pp. 131–133. More detailed information on the inner politics of the SS-23 concession came from Georgy Markovich Kornienko, Interviews June 13, and June 28, 1996, Moscow.

²⁶ Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, pp. 96–97.

Transcripts of the meetings of Shevardnadze with Shultz on April 13, and of Gorbachev with Shultz on April 14, show that Akhromeyev did not participate in, or even attend, the discussion of the shorter-range missiles. Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and Dobrynin were present, however. In fact, the final position agreed to by the political leadership was not coordinated with either the defense minister or the chief of staff precisely because they were on record as strongly opposing it. All attempts by the military to return to the issue of shorter-range missiles in summer and fall 1987 were sidelined by pressure through the party organizations.²⁷

As time went on, opposition to cutting the Oka missiles grew stronger, and some voices regarded the idea of such a concession as tantamount to treason. This was a new and highly technological weapon, only recently deployed—a source of pride for the military and potentially a strong bargaining chip for the diplomats. Marshal Sokolov openly criticized the decision in the Central Committee building, calling it a “state crime” and comparing it to Khrushchev’s “destruction of the navy and of aviation.”²⁸ At that point, events intervened in a bizarre way when a West German amateur pilot named Mathias Rust flew a single-engine Cessna across hundreds of miles of Soviet airspace, landing in the middle of downtown Moscow (close enough to taxi over to Red Square).²⁹ The inexplicable breach of Soviet air defenses gave Gorbachev an opening to remove members of the top military brass who opposed his new thinking and especially the new INF Treaty. Sokolov was replaced by the more loyal and less ambitious Dmitri Yazov at the end of May 1987. Gorbachev’s efforts to deal with his opponents were not helped by Reagan’s unexpected speech in Berlin, where he implored Gorbachev to “tear down this Wall.” The address was seen in Moscow as a pure propaganda move, which in a way it was, because nobody in the Reagan administration at the time believed such a development was in the realm of possibility. In fact, the speech was written for domestic reasons—to get Reagan out from under the shadow of Iran-contra.³⁰

The debates in the Five continued into the fall, especially before Shultz and Carlucci’s visit to Moscow in late October. Two interagency meetings dealt specifically with the controversy around the shorter-range nuclear weapons—September 30 and October 16. The latter meeting’s records reveal strong passions about the concessions Gorbachev had made, but also show that the military understood that the upgraded Oka could reach a range beyond 500km—Katayev

²⁷ Akhromeyev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 133.

²⁸ Quoted in Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*, p. 96.

²⁹ The best account of this incident is Tom LeCompte, “The Notorious Flight of Mathias Rust,” *Air & Space Magazine*, July 2005, <http://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/the-notorious-flight-of-mathias-rust-7101888/?all&no-ist>.

³⁰ Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, pp. 140–143. Mann’s reconstruction of the entire speech writing process is fascinating, pp. 144–208.

penciled in “600.”³¹ According to Georgy Kornienko who was close to Akhromeyev, the political leadership eventually forced the military to accept the position that Gorbachev had agreed to with Shultz, although some senior officers never fully signed off on it.³² The Soviet Union would now have to destroy 239 SS-23/Oka missiles—a distinct blow to the military’s prestige.

Even though he made the decision to include shorter-range weapons in April, Gorbachev announced it to the Politburo only on July 9. In his statement, he presented it as a major step toward “clearing Europe of nuclear weapons” and called for adding a “third zero”—eliminating all tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. In August, the Soviet Union formally announced a global double zero platform, going beyond the Reagan initiative of 1981. Intermediate-range and shorter range missiles would be eliminated both in Europe and in Asia. Thus, an entire class of nuclear weapons would be destroyed for the first time in nuclear history, under conditions of strictest verification. The only Soviet condition for this was that the Pershing 1A missiles would be removed from the FRG (West Germany owned the missiles but the United States owned the warheads; it was the U.S. position that the missiles could not be subject of U.S.-Soviet negotiations). On August 26, Chancellor Kohl made an announcement that the FRG would not modernize its 72 Pershing missiles (with U.S. nuclear warheads) and would destroy them if the INF Treaty was signed and implemented. Double global zero was becoming a reality.

Having cleared the major hurdles on the Oka and verification in the INF, in summer and fall 1987 the Soviet leadership started focusing on their most important goal—preparing and signing the START Treaty during Reagan’s planned visit to Moscow in 1988. Shevardnadze made a trip to Washington on September 15-17 to finalize the INF agreement and to move on to START. In preparation for his visit, Reagan met with the National Security Planning Group (NSPG), where discussion focused on achieving a START agreement during his presidency. Reagan’s talking points stated quite strongly: “I don’t accept the suggestions of some that it is too late for us to get a START agreement before I leave office. I want a START agreement.”³³ The problem was that Reagan also wanted to proceed on SDI, which would require withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, a move that was not acceptable to the Soviets. SDI was very much on Gorbachev’s mind as well. Shevardnadze brought with him a letter from the general secretary, in which Gorbachev referred to “strategic offensive weapons in space” as a problem for the Soviets. But the letter also contained far-reaching ideas, pointing out that “real opportunities ... have appeared for solving at last the problem of the complete elimination of chemical weapons globally,” and calling for negotiations on

³¹ Katayev Collection, Hoover Institution, Box 13, Folder 39.

³² Interview with Georgy Kornienko, May 18, 1996.

³³ Meeting with the National Security Planning Group, September 8, 1987, Reagan Presidential Library, obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.

conventional weapons.³⁴ All this was connected to advances on START. Although not much progress was made in that area during the visit, Shevardnadze's trip was a success in terms of finally reaching agreement on a summit in December and in terms of developing a personal relationship with Shultz. The "human factor" was becoming a buzzword of Soviet diplomacy, much favored by Gorbachev personally.

Moving forward on issues of strategic weapons was the main subject of conversation when Shultz came to Moscow toward the end of October. Transcripts show that Gorbachev very much drove the discussion on START, trying to get Shultz to agree on key provisions of the treaty so that the two leaders could discuss it in December when Gorbachev traveled to Washington. Shultz, however, argued that more detailed work by the delegations in Geneva would be required.³⁵ The meeting was beset by arguments and "Gorbachev was in a querulous mood," according to Matlock.³⁶ He refused to give a firm commitment to come to Washington but promised to write a letter to Reagan explaining his position. He was still reeling from the open conflict with Yeltsin, who criticized *perestroika* at the CC CPSU Plenum commemorating the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, on the eve of Shultz's visit. In a preview of what the summit would be like, Gorbachev and Shultz spent a good deal of time discussing strategic weapons proposals, as well as issues not related to arms control but fundamental to the U.S.-Soviet relationship—Central America, and U.S.-Soviet collaborative efforts to bring an end to the Iran-Iraq war. The tensions produced by the meeting were soon dissolved when Shevardnadze came to Washington on October 30 with a letter from Gorbachev agreeing to the summit and proposing language for a summit announcement.³⁷

Finally, the text of the INF Treaty was ready to sign and the Gorbachevs arrived in Washington on December 7, 1987, for a work-only summit, having declined offers to sightsee in other parts of the United States. As he always did, Reagan started the discussions with human rights issues and gave Gorbachev a list of names of victims. Reagan specifically addressed Soviet emigration policies. However, this time, unlike in Geneva, the general secretary was not on the defensive but instead asked Reagan not to make political declarations and to allow the Soviets to do their own work "to remove this problem from the agenda," adding that otherwise he would not "sit as the accused before a prosecutor."³⁸ The Soviet leader also invited Reagan to come to Moscow during the celebration of the Millennium of

³⁴ Reagan Letter to Gorbachev, September 10, 1987, Reagan Presidential Library, obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.

³⁵ Document No. 43.

³⁶ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 266.

³⁷ Gorbachev Letter to Reagan, October 28, 1987, Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F99-051 by the National Security Archive.

³⁸ Document No. 45.

Christianity in Russia and to visit churches of different denominations. He declared that human rights was a top concern for his government and repeated the idea of holding a joint human rights seminar in Moscow.³⁹

Apart from signing the INF Treaty itself, the main Soviet priority at the summit was to make substantial progress on strategic arms with the idea of signing a START Treaty (incorporating 50 percent reductions) the following year, before Reagan left office. Even though the INF issue was taken out of their negotiating package, the Soviets still insisted on linkage between START and ABM, preserving the basic connection between offensive and defensive weapons. However, the summit did not produce any movement on ABM, and in the words of U.S. negotiator Max Kampelman, "They kicked the can down the road a bit."⁴⁰ In an exchange showing the limits of both sides' thinking during this summit, Shultz reminded Gorbachev that at Reykjavik the U.S. accepted a 10-year nonwithdrawal period conditioned on total elimination of ballistic missiles. Reagan guilelessly interjected that "even elimination of all nuclear weapons was discussed at Reykjavik." Shultz, however, quickly shot down that reflection by stating that "these approaches were no longer a factor in our discussions."⁴¹ The joint communiqué issued at the end of the summit did not resolve the disagreements on ABM and missile defense research and testing, so the language was ambivalent, which in turn led to differences in interpreting the results of the summit at subsequent meetings.

At the afternoon meeting on December 8, Gorbachev initiated a discussion on conventional weapons in Europe, declaring Soviet readiness to proceed on the model of the INF negotiations, where significant breakthroughs had been made in a relatively short period of time. This also implied a Soviet readiness to make more concessions. Gorbachev wanted to address the issue of conventional weapons "straight on," and not "link it to Helsinki" because that would slow things down. However, he did not make any concrete proposals on the issue, and Shultz responded only that the U.S. side was prepared to create a working group on those weapons. The transcript clearly shows that Reagan was not prepared to engage in this conversation and let Shultz carry the discussion. The two sides reached no agreement on how to proceed. Gorbachev made a similar attempt to move forward on chemical weapons, but the discussion did not produce any agreement apart from statements that the issue was highly complicated—in Shultz's words, "an impossible but necessary task." Reagan commented that "any country with a fertilizer plant could make chemical weapons."⁴²

The next day, and again at the luncheon on December 10, after less than fruitful discussions of the remaining START issues, the leaders addressed Third World conflicts—Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, and Central America. On Afghanistan,

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 329.

⁴¹ Document No. 45.

⁴² Document No. 46.

Gorbachev confirmed his commitment to withdraw, which he had made earlier in his conversation with Shultz, but he refused to set a start date. However, he declared that “two events should coincide: the onset of withdrawals and the end to [the U.S.] transfer of arms and financing to the opposition.” Moscow would not have a problem with a non-aligned and independent government, he added. Reagan did not seem to remember that the U.S. side had already made a commitment to stop supplying arms to the rebels in December 1985, within the format of the Geneva negotiations, remarking now, two years later, that the “resistance could not be asked to do this.” Thus negotiations on Afghanistan went nowhere even though Gorbachev announced that the Najibullah government was now proposing to give up to 50 percent of its posts including that of prime minister, to the opposition.⁴³ However persistent Gorbachev was, at this point it was unclear whether Reagan could deliver on that commitment. Charlie Wilson, the colorful congressman from Texas, had pushed hard for a large-scale covert aid program to the mujahideen, which had widespread support in the Congress and the CIA. Reagan, weakened by the Iran-contra scandal, had no interest in confronting Congress on support to “freedom fighters,” especially because his own heart was also clearly in it.

On Nicaragua, the situation was similar. Reagan insisted the joint statement at the end of the summit include a Soviet declaration to stop supplying arms to the Sandinistas. Gorbachev suggested that they both issue such declarations and that the U.S. cease supporting the contras. He proposed that a joint statement include a pledge by both sides to accept the regional Contadora negotiating process and the Guatemala agreements on reconciliation, and that within that context the Soviet Union would be willing to pledge no longer to supply weapons to the Sandinistas.⁴⁴ Gorbachev believed that in regional conflicts progress was possible only if both sides limited their support for clients, and not only that—that they should use their influence to encourage their clients to reach agreement with their opponents within the framework of national reconciliation. He suggested the United States and the Soviet Union cooperate on regional conflicts around the globe, especially in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Central America and Cambodia. All of Gorbachev’s pushing elicited no response from Reagan. He made only one observation—that “perhaps for the Joint Statement we could note agreement that the Soviet Union would stop supplying arms to Nicaragua.” The president remained conspicuously silent on Gorbachev’s other proposals.⁴⁵

After signing the INF Treaty, Gorbachev held a meeting with leading U.S. intellectuals, cultural leaders and statesmen at the Soviet Embassy, where he acted in a friendly and informal manner, talking easily about domestic reforms and the need to radically improve Soviet-American relations. As in Prague in April, a

⁴³ Document No. 49.

⁴⁴ Document No. 52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

wave of Gorbymania now swept the United States. On the last day of the summit, heading to the White House from the Soviet Embassy, Gorbachev asked his driver to stop the car at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and L Street and got out to mingle with the cheering crowd. To the amazement of Washingtonians, the KGB car in front of Gorbachev's limousine "kept driving until they discovered, in a panic, that they had lost their General Secretary." The caravan quickly reversed direction, managing to relocate Gorbachev who was busy shaking hands, talking to passersby and flashing his most engaging and friendly smile.⁴⁶ George Bush, who was in the car with Gorbachev, openly admired the Soviet leader's talent for public relations. Gorbachev himself appreciated the PR success of his trip, referring to it in his memoir as his and Raisa's "invasion" of Washington.⁴⁷

Another important development at the summit for Gorbachev was getting to know George Bush. During two car-rides, the two had a chance to talk about the coming elections, where Bush reviewed his chances of success, expressing his hope to become Gorbachev's next counterpart, and making a commitment to continue the present policy toward improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations. The last car ride, to the airport on December 11, became a kind of meeting of the minds, an informal commitment to cooperation, which both Gorbachev and Bush referred to in later meetings. Gorbachev describes it in detail in his memoir as a very substantive conversation that "laid the foundation of our mutual understanding and trust," and became a "password" in future contacts.⁴⁸

In transcripts of the summit, one often hears Gorbachev's exasperation. He was eager to move quickly on START using the momentum of the INF negotiations and the good will it created on both sides. He also hoped to work with Reagan on regional conflicts, where Gorbachev's vision was of a national reconciliation process supported by both former Cold War adversaries. The Soviet leader tried to minimize differences between himself and Reagan and not respond to perceived provocations during the talks. In 1987, *perestroika* was still very popular in the Soviet Union and Gorbachev had enough political capital and authority to present and actually push through truly radical arms control proposals, but he also needed to show success in arms control to implement his economic reform at home. This ability—both to initiate and to implement breakthroughs in foreign policy—would diminish rapidly in 1989–90. However, policy stasis in Washington meant that Reagan was not forthcoming with counterproposals, while clearly counting on more Soviet concessions and generally acting with great trepidation after having been burned politically by Iran-contra.

Real success in America contrasted sharply with the domestic reaction the Soviet leader had to deal with upon his return. Gorbachev's official report to the Politburo was upbeat and still glowing from his incredibly positive reception on

⁴⁶ Maureen Dowd, "The Summit: As Gorby Works the Crowd, Backward Reels the KGB," *The New York Times*, December 11, 1987.

⁴⁷ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 448.

⁴⁸ Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 2, p. 67; Document No. 52.

the streets of Washington and at numerous meetings with public figures, intellectuals and the artistic elite. He noted especially the human factor and his growing understanding of Western politicians as human beings with whom they shared the same interests and experiences: “We saw Reagan only as the embodiment of the most conservative part of American capitalism and the masters of the military-industrial complex. But it turned out that at the same time the politicians, including the leading heads of state, if they are truly responsible people, also represent the purely human qualities, interests, and the hopes of the common people.”⁴⁹

At this Politburo session, Gorbachev also emphasized the full unity of the Soviet leadership behind the INF Treaty, especially noting Marshal Akhromeyev’s contribution. But the reality remained that the INF Treaty was widely perceived even among the Soviet leadership as favoring the United States. It was an immediate subject of criticism, and it remains so in 2016.

By April 1987, Gorbachev learned not to fear SDI and saw the elimination of INF missiles—even if hugely unequal in numbers—as being in the Soviet interest. He also agreed to the most stringent and invasive verification measures—more than the Americans were willing to accept. The following year, the Soviets would discover that having made so many concessions and paid for them with the resignation of Marshal Akhromeyev, they still had not come close to their main goal—a START Treaty with Reagan. This was not for lack of commitment by Reagan himself—he genuinely wanted deep disarmament. But his administration was profoundly divided between those like Secretary of State Shultz, who trusted his Soviet counterparts and believed that rapid progress toward a START Treaty was a good idea, and others like Secretary of Defense Weinberger and Deputy CIA Director Robert Gates, who believed that Gorbachev was no different from his predecessors and only wanted to strengthen the Soviet system.⁵⁰ Continued focus on SDI and the resistance to nuclear disarmament of some key allies like Margaret Thatcher made the U.S. side more willing to grab concessions from the Soviets than move ahead with their own proposals.

The summit produced no real progress on any of the most important issues other than INF. However, it contributed significantly to the improvement of relations between the USSR and the United States, and provided a long-desired stage for Gorbachev to act out his talented amateur’s dream to charm the American audience and to engage the “human factor” to the fullest.

⁴⁹ Document No. 54.

⁵⁰ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 269.

Document No. 39: Memorandum from Yakovlev to Gorbachev:
“Analysis of the Visit to the USSR of Prominent American Political
Leaders (Kissinger, Vance, Kirkpatrick, Brown, et al.)”

February 25, 1987

This long memorandum analyzes the statements and impressions of a high-profile delegation from the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations, which visited the Soviet Union earlier in the month, and provides recommendations for Gorbachev's next moves in arms control and Soviet-American relations. Yakovlev makes the most powerful argument to date for “untying the package” of strategic offensive weapons, INF and ABM systems, which formed the basis of the Soviet position in Reykjavik. Surprisingly, he does not focus on Soviet security or linkage to SDI. His line of reasoning mainly concerns domestic politics in the United States, where right-wing forces are described as essentially running the administration and the Iran-contra scandal has significantly weakened President Reagan. If the Soviet Union is to have any chance of achieving an agreement before the end of Reagan's term in two years, it needs major new initiatives that will persuade Washington to engage in a more rigorous arms control protocol. Therefore, the timing is ripe for untying the package in order to show the seriousness of Soviet intentions. The memo implies that the Soviet side must be prepared to make concessions while protecting its security interests. Yakovlev's second argument, which makes the timing even more important, states that the resumption of Soviet nuclear testing (with the first test planned for February 26, 1987) would damage perestroika's image in Europe. The announcement of an important new initiative such as separating the INF and ABM components of the negotiations would counteract the damage incurred by resumed testing. This memorandum shows the impact of groups like the Council on Foreign Relations on Soviet policy-makers, and the attentiveness of Soviet leaders to perceptions of perestroika abroad.

I. WHAT DOES THE VISIT SIGNIFY?

The main purpose of this group's visit is, to a minor degree, to analyze the current state of Soviet-American relations. The strategic basis for this is to form a “primary source” assessment of our country's prospects for future development in light of the probable election in the United States in 1988 of a president who will represent the next generation of the ruling elite. *Hence the examination of the possibility of new substance and forms in relations with the Soviet Union.*⁵¹ [...]

⁵¹ Yakovlev's own underlining appears throughout the document in italics. [Editors]

6. *What does the sphere of common Soviet and U.S. interests consist of today?*

All members of the group were united in the opinion that the principal sphere of common interests lies in preventing nuclear war, and creating and strengthening guarantees against its outbreak.

Members of the group also considered the two countries' reduction of military expenditures as a sphere of growing common interest. [Former Commerce Secretary Peter G.] Peterson emphasized that in the last two or three years in U.S. business circles a serious concern has arisen about the consequences of the growth of military spending and the corresponding U.S. *national budget* deficit. He mentioned that fears of a deficit were very strong in business circles, especially because its impact could affect literally everything—U.S. domestic life, relations with allies and with the “third world,” and so on.

As a result of conversations in Moscow, the belief in the idea of “exhausting the USSR with the arms race” was undermined. Members of the group noted that in the face of the USSR, the way it is imaginable in the future, the USA would not be able to allow itself excessive military spending (Peterson, Tarnoff, Jones, Vance)⁵²; otherwise, they would exhaust themselves.

At the same time, members of the group *essentially do not see any other spheres of common interest between the USSR and the USA*. The idea of complete elimination of nuclear armaments is being received with alarm. There are three arguments against this idea:

- the belief that nuclear weapons alone have preserved the peace for the last forty years, and would be capable of preserving it in the future;
- the concern that if nuclear weapons were eliminated, the USSR would attain greater superiority in conventional weapons;
- that whereas thinking within the “nuclear” framework is sufficiently well developed, the liquidation of nuclear weapons would return foreign policy thinking in the U.S. to the level and concepts of the 1940s–1950s.

Concerns about the prospect of eliminating nuclear weapons are so strong that, according to the statements of some members of the group (Kissinger, [former Defense Secretary] Harold Brown), the proponents of arms control in the U.S. have “quieted down”; they are frightened of both Soviet superiority in conventional armaments and of the possibility of an unprecedented arms race in this sphere on the basis of new technologies.

The conclusion of the group's members: nuclear armaments should be considerably reduced on the basis of strategic stability, but not eliminated completely.

⁵² In addition to Peterson (already named) and Cyrus Vance, the other two are Council on Foreign Relations President Peter Tarnoff and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff David C. Jones. [Editors]

7. *The prospects for Soviet-American relations,
especially for the immediate future.*

This is the main [subject] that was analyzed and discussed. On this, members of the group expressed two points of view, which, strictly speaking, did not contradict each other.

First: in principle, there exists an opportunity to achieve agreement on disarmament during this period, but only if we “untie” the Reykjavik package. In this case, an agreement on INF could be the easiest to achieve. An agreement on SDI/ABM is not impossible either, but it would require great effort.

Second: even if Reagan “wakes up” in the remaining two years and wants to achieve an agreement on something, nothing would come out of it due to the balance of forces in the administration and the power of the extreme right to counter such agreements with allegations that they would contradict the provisions previously accepted by the administration.

It is telling that both the first and the second assessments were expressed by the same people (Kissinger, Vance, Brown, Tarnoff). *However, they all emphasized the need* in any case not to stop conducting an “intensive policy” toward the U.S., which would by virtue of its existence *neutralize the threat of the extreme right*. And this threat, according to the general assessment of the group, is real, and its scope is increasing along with the growing difficulties of the administration and with national elections in 1988 drawing closer.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

The trip to Moscow, of course, did not lead the members of the group to change their general views—nobody would have expected that anyway. The principal concepts of goals remained the same, as well. One thing has changed noticeably, however—the *opinion was confirmed that the USSR has started and will continue in the future the kinds of domestic reforms that might require deep corrections in American prognoses of the future development of Soviet society—corrections of a political, economic and international nature.*

Perestroika is not seen as threatening to U.S. interests, apparently mainly because they are waiting to see how things progress here. U.S. Sovietologists obviously need more time for a deeper analysis of the interconnections between the USSR’s domestic and foreign policies in the future. All things considered, members of the group are intent on working out some kind of alternative to the Reagan course, but at this point they are still unable to present it convincingly to the public and to the political elite of the United States. There remains a certain lack of clarity after the mistakes [that have been made] in their theoretical blueprints and practical actions.

Therefore, *[we are facing] the task of [applying] incessant and effective political pressure on the United States* with the objective of countering Reagan’s course and of providing support for those forces within the U.S. ruling class who stand against this course.

It appears that the most effective step here in the present circumstances could be to “untie the package” that was proposed at the summit in Reykjavik, and to redefine the relationships between its constituent parts. Tactically, such “untying” could be either a one-time event, presented in some “dramatic” form, or done over a more extended period of time, either instantly and fully open and public, or containing both public and diplomatic forms. It would be most preferable to transform the “package” into a “framework agreement” based on the 1974 Vladivostok model.

A. The presentation of the “package” in Reykjavik was *precise, right, and necessary*. We needed a powerful initiative, which would capture public opinion, conduct an assertive “reconnaissance by fighting” of the administration’s positions, illuminate those positions, and would become a means of putting pressure on them. And a powerful initiative should have reliable insurance. Our initiatives have met all of these criteria with distinction:

- a. Reagan’s position as a proponent of a military-force approach was exposed to the maximum extent;
- b. In terms of domestic support, the SDI is now weaker in the U.S. than it was before Reykjavik—it is not an accident that Weinberger and the far right are rushing the decision to deploy [SDI]. In Congress, the mood is increasingly against full-scale SDI because of financial considerations, as well;
- c. The administration is weaker in terms of foreign policy: Irangate became possible only after and due to Reykjavik. It is a form of retribution against Reagan for Reykjavik (simultaneously from several sides);
- d. A deep split has occurred in public opinion in the West as a whole, which is now using multiple channels to access all aspects of relations between East and West, as well as within NATO. This split is even more effective due to the fact that it came as a complete surprise to the West;
- e. The ideas expressed in the “package” are still at work, almost half a year after Reykjavik, as a factor in mobilizing the elements of new political thinking worldwide, and in counteracting the line of the Reagan administration. But it is precisely the ideas [themselves], not the “package” as such.

In short, we created an *extremely important and effective beachhead* for our offensive against Reagan. Today, without losing any time, *we should expand it*, turn it into a beachhead for an offensive against the positions of the forces of the far right and of the active proponents of the arms race in general, while at the same time ensuring opportunities *for cooperation in this sphere with moderately conservative and liberal groups* in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Objective opportunities for this do exist. The Reagan administration stumbled backwards after Reykjavik. Having [now] taken positions on SDI that are even more aggressive than [those presented] during the summit itself, *Washington*, it

seems, is trying to exclude the possibility of a positive shift on any of the issues of our “package” in advance, even as they publicly state the exact opposite. This turns the “package” into a dead end.

It looks like the White House is deeply convinced that the “package” represents our final position. The responses to your latest statements show that they were waiting for new proposals or concessions from us. Not having received them, they must be thinking now in Washington that any serious progress on the Soviet position is unlikely. Under these conditions, “untying the package” would become just another action that finally unmask the genuine essence of the U.S. position on the issues of limitation and arms reductions.

B. *We should not let the next U.S. trick go unanswered.* For us, the “package” in and of itself is not a goal, but a means. The Soviet side should not allow Washington to sow doubts about our intentions, shift responsibility for the lack of progress in the negotiations to the USSR, [or] capture the political initiative by painting a prospect for public opinion of “fully realistic” 50 percent cuts, etc.

There is no guarantee that if we “untie the package,” the U.S. side would assent to balanced agreements with us. The facts suggest a completely different tendency in the development of Reagan’s position. But another point is equally true: in the atmosphere of stagnation, one notices the borders are blurring in Western European public opinion, and even partially in American [public opinion]; both superpowers are being perceived as incapable of responding positively to the aspirations of the masses.

In politics, *maximum freedom to maneuver is always valuable*. The “package” in its present form only ties our hands. We don’t have grounds to expect that everything will work out on its own, that Reagan will have an epiphany that in Reykjavik he missed his best chance to go down in history not as a dissembler [шутедей], but as a statesman. For that, Reagan is not intelligent enough and too limited in his freedom of choice.

In [our] analysis of the situation, we should take one more aspect into account. Under the current correlation of forces, the *USSR is confronting the U.S. not only in the international arena, but also inside the U.S. itself*. Of course, we cannot elect a “good” President ourselves. ...We cannot persuade him to make “good” policy for us. However, we can protect ourselves from the worst. Today this would mean: increasing pressure on Reagan and the circles standing behind him. Adding more flexibility and dynamism to the Soviet approach would increase such pressure.

C. *Are agreements on separate issues in our interest?* I think yes. We never formulated the issue as “all or nothing.” We are not presenting it in such a form now, either; we are not linking the “package” with nuclear testing, [or] chemical weapons. What agreements are possible in principle?

- a. *INF*, with a simultaneous discussion about tactical missiles. For us this would be tantamount to removing a very serious threat. It would boost our reputation in Europe. Ultimately, it would make our relations with China easier.

In any case, it is unlikely that we would have to penetrate SDI, if it is ever built, with intermediate-range missiles. “Untying the package” makes this agreement attainable, while preserving the “package” blocks it. Here the benefit of untying is obvious.

- b. *A 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons*, emphasizing our readiness to proceed to full nuclear disarmament. If it were possible, the benefit of such a reduction would be undeniable in all respects: political, economic, moral, and military. *Building up strategic offensive weapons would make sense only in order to penetrate SDI, but we still have to undertake a comprehensive analysis of this issue.*
- c. *The following model for a settlement also deserves consideration*: a 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons (the number of delivery vehicles and the number of warheads would be decreased by half in real terms, while each side would have the right to decide the relative proportion of ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers); a simultaneous 50 percent decrease in U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range missiles in the European zone; a 50 percent reduction in U.S. forward-based systems. If the U.S. agrees to adequately reduce its forward-based systems in Japan and South Korea, [we should agree] to bring the number of [our] intermediate-range missiles in Asia (and respectively in the U.S. territory) down to 100 (warheads).

At the same time, we take into account that the United States links the implementation of INF measures in Europe with strict verification. Consequently, U.S. territory as such would be left outside of the verification regime, while inspections in England, the FRG, and other countries would require complicated coordination with national governments.

Will the U.S. go for such decisions? It is already clear—*not under Reagan!* Under these conditions, our acceptance of an agreement outside the “package” would have the following pluses for us:

- [it would] uncover the true positions of the U.S. and become a powerful and long-term instrument of pressure on the Americans and their course;
 - [it would] act as a stimulus to limit appropriations for SDI in the American Congress; the stimulus [would be] even more effective if we could preserve existing limits and cut at least some armaments, at least the INF. The political and psychological effects of such a step would be very significant, especially taking into account growing U.S. financial difficulties.
- d. *SDI proper*. At this point, the Soviet Union stands by its position of a complete rejection of all military technologies that constitute the basis of this American program. If we want to be logical and persuasive in our struggle

with SDI on this platform, *we have to be ready* to put forth the idea of not just limitation, but full renunciation of ABM systems, i.e. *a toughening of the requirements of the 1972 ABM Treaty*. Any limitation is misleading, as it leaves loopholes for circumvention and misunderstandings.

A ban on ABM [systems] would mean very little real change for us, because during the last decade systems have emerged against which there are no effective counter-systems; and the quantitative limitations under the treaty are very poorly linked with the actual scale of potential massive strikes. Consequently, the Moscow ABM district has significance only as a research and testing ground, and as a contingency in the event that the question arises about deploying a defense system for the national territory.

It appears that the U.S.—at least up to the point of actually testing developed technologies on real targets—is not going to negotiate with us about turning the ABM Treaty into a treaty banning ABM [systems]. The latter would become possible only if testing within the SDI framework returns disappointing results, or if the systems themselves turn out to be so complicated and expensive that Washington prefers to cut back the system. However, testing outside the framework of the existing treaty would mean the end of its existence unless, of course, both sides agree to something else before such testing.

The issue of making concessions to the Americans with respect to a “broad interpretation” of the ABM Treaty could realistically be raised only if there is appropriate compensation on Washington’s part. *For example: finding an agreed upon modus on the legal status of space. Further, developing regulations on certain kinds of activities in space, or even better—in relation to objects in space. Finally, formulating objective criteria to distinguish between the defensive and non-defensive character of systems allowed to be deployed in space, and the methodology for verifying implementation of the agreed-upon obligations.*

What is the point of putting forth this kind of consideration? *First of all*, it would not be expedient to give our opponents a pretext for alleging that the USSR made success in Reykjavik impossible by linking nuclear disarmament to SDI. *Secondly*, by providing details of our approach (explaining terms such as laboratory research, and so on), we would demonstrate that a development of this kind would have already been possible at Reykjavik had the United States wanted to bring our positions closer together. *Thirdly*, raising a number of questions for discussion would allow us to weaken the link between the ABM and SDI without any damage to our reputation, and allow us to engage in parallel negotiations.

In general, *partial agreements*—on SDI and on all other issues—are *in our interest* in terms of their potential content and by virtue of the fact that their existence would expand and strengthen the political and legal basis for Soviet-American relations. *We need to clear the way for such agreements as much as possible.* [...]

From the USSR’s national security perspective, the “untying of the package” *does not present any real “minuses”*: the content of the proposals

essentially remains the same. In and of itself, untying in no way signifies an automatic agreement with conditions that are unfavorable to us. We also reserve the possibility of proposing other linkages and packages should such a need arise. [...]

Would the untying of the “package” be interpreted as an expression of our *excessive* interest in [reaching] agreements? Of course it would. But this is how everything is interpreted now anyway. The Reagan administration cannot raise the level of their demands—it has already been raised to the limit, and the general political atmosphere and the positions of the administration are not the same as they were in 1981–1982. At the same time, it is still a long time before a new administration comes to power.

However, taking into account [the possibility] that with a new administration coming to power more favorable conditions could develop for reaching agreements, including on SDI, it appears most expedient to prepare our positions in advance. “Untying the package” would now be seen as precisely that kind of preparation, beyond everything else. To the contrary, taking this step closer to the time of achieving future agreements would give the U.S. further grounds to draw conclusions about our excessive interest in agreements.

A public speech announcing the untying of the package, if it were to take place in the immediate future, could compensate, in the eyes of the world, for our reciprocal resumption of nuclear testing. This consideration is not decisive here, but it also needs to be taken into account.

D. *It is extremely important now not to lose the tempo we have developed, and not to lose time.* If we want to untie the package, we need to do it right now, because later the effect will be much weaker:

- at present, nobody expects a step like this from us. On the contrary, it looks as though in the West and in the United States the impression is growing that we have “written off the Reagan administration”;
- the U.S. elections are still far off. Closer to the start of the electoral campaign, many people would inevitably interpret such a step as an effort to influence the outcome of the elections;
- objectively, we still have several months to complete the agreements before the electoral campaign starts, and under these conditions our approach would be perceived as a natural one;
- for these and many other reasons, we should not create the impression that we are providing any kind of “advance” to a future U.S. administration;
- “Irangate” will conclude one way or another. Depending on its resolution, our approach could be interpreted either as “dealing the final blow” to Reagan or, on the contrary, as a concession to the President, who has emerged from the crisis in a “strengthened” position;
- finally, informed people will see this as a positive response to what many prominent foreigners have said in Moscow.

Therefore, if we undertake the untying of the package in the immediate future, it will objectively appear to be *one more expression of our good will and common sense, and a practical expression of our new thinking, the unity of words and deeds.*

And one more consideration. This experience shows that the U.S. concludes significant agreements when they sense the strength of our position. The advent of this moment will be connected, among other things, with the demonstration of our unquestionable achievements in the material sphere. Such a time will come, it seems, in several years. It will be at that point that a “breakthrough” of some kind in Soviet-American relations will become possible. Therefore, it is expedient to view the actions we undertake now as an “accumulation” of authority and positions in anticipation of that sort of moment in the future, and as a *long-term political investment.* [...]

[Source: *State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 10063, Opis 1, Delo 388. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 40: Memorandum of Conversation between Gorbachev and Shultz

April 14, 1987

During this meeting with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze (joined by Marshal Akhromeyev after the break), Shultz presses for inclusion of shorter-range nuclear missiles into the treaty, including the new Soviet Oka/SS-23s, which according to the Soviet side have a range of only 400 kilometers. (As a result of the upcoming INF agreement, the USSR would have to destroy 239 of these modern, newly deployed and highly mobile missiles, which allowed for a breakthrough in negotiations but resulted in heavy criticism from the military). Shultz also insists on the principle of “equality,” which would allow the United States to match the number of Soviet SRINF even though the U.S. did not have these at the time. Gorbachev tries very hard to counter this argument and persuade Shultz that since the Soviet Union was willing to eliminate all weapons of that class, the U.S. should not reserve for itself the right to develop those. Gorbachev also expresses for the first time Soviet agreement with the U.S. idea of global double zero on INF and SRINF, but Shultz does not seem to grasp it, most likely because his instructions did not mandate that he pursue that proposal. To Shultz’s expressed concern about issues of verification, Gorbachev offers the deepest and most comprehensive verification regime yet, going well beyond what the Americans are prepared for. Discussing strategic offensive weapons, Shultz raises the issue of a sub-ceiling for elements of the strategic triad and Gorbachev emotionally accuses him of backtracking on the Reykjavik understandings—to cut the strategic triad by half. Gorbachev raises the linkage between SDI and strategic offensive weapons but offers a new Soviet understanding of laboratory testing that would be permitted by the treaty. The meeting signifies a real breakthrough in INF negotiations due to three major, new Soviet initiatives: agreement to include SRINF, a comprehensive verification regime, and a willingness to accept the U.S. principle of “equality.”

(At the beginning of the conversation, G. Shultz handed M. S. Gorbachev a personal letter from President of the United States Ronald Reagan.)

Gorbachev. I had a brief look at the contents of the letter. I welcome it. As I understand it, this letter, so to speak, is something of an invitation.

Shultz. Yes, and in addition, it represents the personal contact which, the President believes, has been established between you and him.

Gorbachev. I see it as a certain impetus for us. I want to say that notwithstanding all the difficulties and all the upheavals we continue to strive for cooperation with the Reagan administration. We have already accumulated a certain experience in communicating and we have some results. And most importantly—the United States will remain the United States, regardless of which party and which administration is in power. The United States remains a country with its own national interests. And we start from that assumption.

Shultz. This is a reasonable approach.

Gorbachev. It is part of the new thinking that we are developing right now. And we call on you to join the campaign to spread this new thinking.

Shultz. This morning I had one of the most interesting conversations of all my meetings with Soviet leaders. I am talking about my meeting with Mr. Ryzhkov about economic issues.

[...]

Shultz. Yes. And besides, in Reykjavik, you and the President emphasized the importance of verification. I repeatedly quoted your statements from Reykjavik to that effect, and I noted your Friday speech in Prague as well. We presented a draft of the treaty, which contains detailed proposals on verification. You, for your part, informed us that you agree with all the principles of verification proposed by us, and maybe even wish to go further. The key here, of course, is to agree on concrete details. Therefore, we are waiting for a detailed response to our proposals. We believe that the INF treaty should become a future model for verification.

We hope that it will lead to subsequent agreements on strategic weapons, which, as you said in your speech on Friday, represent the core problem. By the way, from the perspective of verification, there are very strong arguments in favor of a complete zero version on INF. It would be substantially better, in regards to trust, to have the ability to verify the end result. We hope that you will still consider arguments in favor of global zero.

But I repeat, on the two central issues of the treaty, we are clearly on the way to an agreement. What emerges here is the question of shorter-range missiles. We have studied your proposal, which your Minister explained to me in detail yesterday. I would like to focus on the principles that, in our view, must determine our decision on this issue. Generally speaking, they do not contradict the concrete stipulations of your new proposal, although I have to say that we have not yet fully analyzed all of these concrete proposals. The first of these principles that we need to start from is an understanding regarding a ceiling on these missiles.

[...]

Shultz. [...] Additional work will be required only for coordinating the quantitative parameters of this agreement. Here are the principles: first of all, to establish the ceiling at your present level, minus the missiles being withdrawn from the GDR and Czechoslovakia. But the ceiling is necessary. Secondly, this ceiling or zero [missiles] (depending on what we agree on) will be applied on a global basis.

Gorbachev. What do you mean by “a global basis?”

Shultz. That we would not have such missiles at all, or we would have some number of them on a global basis.

Gorbachev. Deployed in the U.S., in Asia, or on bases?

Shultz. Zero on a global basis, or some number regardless of where they are deployed.

The third principle is a principle that we consider important in our relations in general—the principle of equality. Today we do not have such missiles.

Therefore, we need to have the right to a level equal to you, regardless of whether we would use this right or not.

Gorbachev. But we want to eliminate these missiles.

Shultz. However, that will not happen overnight and would require a certain amount of time while the negotiations take place.

Gorbachev. If in this agreement the Soviet Union undertakes an obligation to eliminate tactical missiles within some defined period of time, for example, within a year, then why would you want to increase your armaments?

Shultz. We want to have the right to have an equal level.

Gorbachev. I think we should search for some formula here.

[...]

Gorbachev. [...] There should not be any obstacles for verification. There should be guaranteed access for inspections of industrial enterprises, whether private or state-owned, of bases, including those in third countries, places of storage, factories, depots and so on, regardless of whether any particular company has contracts with the Pentagon or not. Concrete proposals on this issue should become the subject of negotiations.

Regarding the related issue of shorter-range missiles, we are willing to start and hold negotiations on such missiles simultaneously with negotiations on INF. If you think that an agreement on INF would be achieved before an agreement on operational-tactical missiles, then it could include the principles governing shorter-range missiles. In that case, we would withdraw and eliminate a part of those missiles in the context of the INF agreement.

At the same time, we would conduct negotiations on the remaining missiles. And besides, we are in favor of their elimination, and such a decision would remove all our questions about parity, global basis, and ceilings, i.e., it would satisfy your principles. We could resolve the question of Asia in the same way we resolved the INF question.

Shultz. What do you have in mind?

Gorbachev. We would have an equal level for both the USSR and the U.S. outside of Europe, or a zero level. In other words, we are in favor of a global decision.

Shultz. We think that it does not make any sense to discuss geographical location in connection with these missiles at all, because they are highly mobile.

Gorbachev. In any case, we are in favor of a global zero level.

Shultz. I think we have a basis for a possible agreement. First of all, the issue of shorter-range weapons would be represented in the treaty on intermediate-range missiles. I think it is clear to us which weapons we are talking about.

Gorbachev. As we understand it, it regards the SS-23 missiles and other missiles of this class.

Shultz. The issue of shorter-range missiles will be resolved on the basis of a global ceiling. The initial ceiling will be determined by subtracting from your current level the number of missiles now deployed in the GDR and Czechoslovakia. Then additional negotiations will be conducted about the remaining missiles. During that period, the United States will have the right to have an equal level

with the Soviet level on these missiles. At the same time, the Soviet Union would announce in advance (although it is up to you to decide), that its position at the forthcoming negotiations would presuppose elimination of the remaining missiles. We have not decided yet what our position would be at these negotiations. But we will be talking about some quantity; I cannot say precisely how many right now. Therefore, the question of what the final equal level would be—zero, or some other [level]—would be decided at the negotiations.

Gorbachev. You obviously are defending the position you came here with and which you formulated before we proposed elimination of all shorter-range missiles, not only those deployed in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, but all of them. You did not know when you were formulating your position that we would agree not just to freeze, but to conduct negotiations and eliminate the shorter-range missiles within a short time-period. Why then would you need to increase your armaments? I simply do not understand. There is no logic in that at all, maybe with the exception of a purely legalistic interpretation of the right to equality. But this, it seems to me, is just casuistry.

[...]

Gorbachev. [...] we should look at the issues in their entirety. And naturally, we should also consult with our allies.

Shultz. I still think that the group of issues relating to the INF and shorter-range missiles is one thing, and other issues constitute another category.

Gorbachev. I would not link tactical missiles with the INF and shorter-range missiles. We will still get to them.

And now I propose that we take a break, after which we can discuss the issue we first considered in Reykjavik: strategic offensive weapons.

(After the break)

Gorbachev. As I understand it, yesterday you and E. A. Shevardnadze had an exchange about strategic weapons. Maybe we could now briefly summarize the positions of each side?

Shultz. I will say honestly that I was somewhat disappointed. It seemed to me that we made good progress in Reykjavik. However, we have not moved any further.

We agree now, as we agreed in Reykjavik, to have the ceiling on the number of warheads on strategic offensive weapons at 6,000 units, and of strategic delivery vehicles at 1,600 units. We also agreed in Reykjavik that the reductions would affect all the main elements of both sides' nuclear potential, the entire triad. I remember your gesture during the meeting at Hofdi, so to speak, to cut all currently existing quantities by half.

Gorbachev. We came to a good agreement then—to reduce all components by half. Mr. Nitze, it seems, does not agree with me, because that agreement was reached without him.

[...]

Shultz. [...] From the point of view of our Air Force, it is quite a firm limit. In particular, [the limit] on the number of planes with air-launched cruise missiles. The quantity of these cruise missiles is limited at a level of 1,200 units, or, if that limit is exceeded, it would be necessary to reduce the number of ballistic missiles, and our Air Force has quite far-reaching plans. They believe that they have good “Stealth” technology, cruise missiles and so on. The proposed version also limits the allowed number of SLBMs, of which we now have a considerable quantity. Besides that, if we keep the modernized version of our ICBMs, the number of SLBMs would be even more strictly limited. Therefore, it is not easy for us to squeeze into all these limits, but we believe that it can be done. We thought that it would be acceptable in principle for you, too. That is why, in particular, we consider the sub-level of 4,800 within the overall level of 6,000 warheads important.

Gorbachev. But in Reykjavik, we specifically walked away from all these sublevels. There, as you remember, we talked about the fact that the structure of strategic offensive weapons on each side has its own historically developed special features. The relative weight of each of the three elements of the triad is different for you and us. And then, as I see it, we came to the understanding that the problem hides precisely in those sub-levels, that they are the reason for the dead end to which the negotiations came, because in the discussion of those sub-levels, each side tries to ensure its own security interests and insists on certain things that are unacceptable for the other side. This is how the dead end arises. That is why we proposed to take the triad as it exists now, and to cut it all in half in five years. The triad would remain, but at a different level—reduced by half. The formula is simple and clear. But now I am starting to suspect that you don’t want to stand by what you personally, Mr. Secretary of State, called acceptable in Reykjavik. Maybe Mr. Nitze does not like this formula, but it is a simple and realistic one.

Shultz. In our view, it is ineffective because it does not ensure stability and does not ensure necessary equality. In principle, we agree with the idea that in the process of reductions, we need to respect the existing structure of strategic forces. But at the same time, our goal is to achieve equal levels and stability. This is the main idea that was passed to the Nitze-Akhromeyev group for consideration, so that they would be able to translate it into concrete parameters. A purely mechanical reduction by half will not, in our view, produce a reasonable, appropriate result. I repeat—the general idea is to subject all elements of the triad to reductions and at the same time to take into account some of the concerns of the other side.

Gorbachev. Mr. Secretary of State, do you think that it would be fair to say that strategic parity exists between our countries today?

Shultz. You have more ballistic missiles than we do. We have a different structure of forces, and I have to say that in the framework of your structure you have colossal ICBM forces, far exceeding ours. Also you undertook quite impressive steps in other spheres. In general, in our view, you have a very impressive arsenal.

Gorbachev. So what do you mean—we do not have strategic parity?

Shultz. Of course I would very much like to feel confident in this respect and to believe that everything is in order. However, we witnessed a powerful process of modernization in the development of your forces, and an increase in the number of missiles and warheads, and that caused great anxiety among us. This is precisely why under President Reagan you saw such a stepping up of U.S. efforts in this sphere.

Gorbachev. And yet the fact remains that we have an approximate equality between us, parity in the qualitative sphere, in the sense of power and the potential of our strategic forces. And even though it exists at a very high level [of armaments], and disarmament is needed, we do have stability today. You are saying that you feel especially threatened by our ICBMs. We feel even more threatened by your side's SLBMs because they are less vulnerable, equipped with MIRVs, and very accurate. And even though you have undermined the last mechanism limiting the strategic arms race—the SALT II Treaty—we abide by its limits. As is known, we have reduced the number of our missiles before. I still think that we have a common understanding that strategic parity exists between us. Therefore, if strategic parity is ensured today within the framework of the existing structure and quantity of offensive strategic weapons, then we will preserve the balance when we reduce them by 50 percent, but at a level twice as low. Isn't that so? And that way we would avoid all of these calculations, confusion, mutual suspicions and accusations of bad intentions that emerge when we start talking about sub-levels. It seems to me that we found a simple and clear mechanism for resolving this issue in Reykjavik, and I thought that you agreed with it, you personally, Mr. Secretary of State. That is why I am so surprised today.

[...]

Gorbachev. [...] I think the Administration got caught in a trap of its own making here. Large contracts have already been placed, entire sectors of industry were engaged, you are placing your bets on a breakthrough in information technology systems. Do you really think that, as President Johnson used to say, whoever controls space controls the entire world? If this is your policy, then it is based on a misconception, on a serious misconception. And that is bad for you, and for us, and for the entire world.

In Reykjavik, I said that if the U.S. administration was so attached to SDI, then we could give our agreement to the continuation of laboratory research, and then you could say that SDI was preserved as a research program. We have thought through this issue once again. We thought about what could be done to untie this knot that has been tied by the administration. We can talk about it with you. We have thought through the issue of what would constitute laboratory research that does not contradict the ABM Treaty, and what "laboratory" would mean in that context. We are explaining to you now for the first time what laboratory research would mean. We believe that it should mean research in laboratories on the ground, in research institutes, at production plants, at testing grounds and fields. Maybe we could look for a compromise on the basis of such

an approach. We could discuss during negotiations precisely which components would be barred from deployment in space.

This is what we can propose. Frankly speaking, we are making our “final efforts” because the position of the U.S. administration amounts to very real extortion with regard to its partner; it is a position that treats its partner disrespectfully. One cannot do business like this. And think about how our descendants will remember us. [...]

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 41: Plan of Negotiations with Reagan in Washington [Draft Dictated by Gorbachev to His Adviser Chernyaev]

May 1987⁵³

In this draft, Gorbachev outlines his ideas for the first one-on-one conversation with Reagan during this summit. He will be coming with a very ambitious agenda—not limited to the INF Treaty but in fact looking far beyond it. In the very first conversation, he is prepared to engage Reagan on START, chemical weapons, conventional weapons, and regional problems. The scope of issues mentioned here and the solutions proposed for each of them show what a monumental opportunity the summit represented for Moscow, with the leadership's willingness to be flexible on practically all of the issues that had been stumbling blocks not only for arms control negotiations but for the resolution of regional conflicts such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, and the situation in Central America. Characteristically, Gorbachev shows strong optimism about his and Reagan's ability to deal with these issues decisively.

The first conversation will last an hour-and-a-half. Thirty minutes of that will be one-on-one; the rest will be together with the ministers, as we have to establish all the problems and then include the working groups.

How do I envision the conversation?

After the greetings, I will go over Geneva, Reykjavik, and the work done afterwards. This is an entire stage. Work was done at the top levels as well. The dialogue was enriched, greater realities were considered. It is very important that an element of reciprocal personal responsibility between former officials is considered.

For the first time we have a document that allows us to discuss the problems of START and plan out our steps. We will discuss the questions of chemical weapons and conventional weapons, as well as regional problems.

The very nature of this broad scope of problems already evidences the fact that together we are capable of examining key issues of world politics. And we are ready to rise to the level that nations expect from us.

People want us to become closer. They do not want any more confrontation. I have an enormous collection of letters from Soviet people. I could read from some of them. The leitmotif of all these letters is: "Let us have a life, too!" We

⁵³ The original document at the Gorbachev Foundation Archive has the date May 1988 written on the first page. However, it is clear from the content that the document was misdated and relates to the Washington 1987 summit. [Editors]

have to express the people's will—that of our people and others. What we are doing right now in Soviet-American relations will forever be in world history.

Nuclear weapons. This issue worries our people as well as the American people. Movement forward is planned. And we need to be prepared to control the arms race.

Regional conflicts. I would change the approach to this problem. We need to cease mutual accusations. We should put away the question of causes of conflicts. There are various conflicts before us. There are opportunities for political solutions and even for reconciliation. These possibilities exist in Central America, in Afghanistan, and in Kampuchea.

The Middle East. There is awareness of the fact that we need a joint effort, that separatist agreements are not reaching their goals. In Angola, there is evidence of a desire to look for a way out through political means.

This is the situation: people turn to you and to me with hope. Let us approach the negotiations from this point of view. Of course, some will try to get their way. The objectors will make noise. But somehow, we need to start competently making sense of everything. And we should send positive signals.

I welcome negotiations that would lead to real results. Take the medium-range missiles agreement, for example. We had so many doubts and difficulties. And the American side almost cancelled Reykjavik. If the negotiations get stuck on polemics, they will not lead to anything. For example, I did not agree with many things in Geneva. It was clear to me that our positions were far apart from each other. But I forced myself not to exaggerate these difficulties. And now I note that it gave us the opportunity to move forward. I would like your visit to Moscow to be an official visit. We will gain great political capital, and I am ready to collaborate with you until the end.

Now we call in the ministers and continue the conversation in a large group.

On nuclear weapons. On testing, each side should thoroughly consult with its scientists so that, on that basis, it would make decisions and conduct negotiations taking into consideration its own security and consequences for the entire world. The same applies for SDI and anti-SDI. The principle is clear: when one side breaks the ABM Treaty, the other side is free of its obligations under the Treaty.

We should propose the creation of an international committee of prominent scientists. The members of this committee would have direct access to the CC CPSU General Secretary and the President of the U.S. The representatives of the Pugwash movement could take part in this committee. Propose a mutual ban on test explosions for the duration of negotiations on a testing ban.

Afghanistan. We know [Diego] Cordovez's position. The most important issue here is to name the date of the troop withdrawal and, at the same time, the cessation date of U.S. aid to the Mujahedin. From the time the withdrawal date is announced, troops will not fight and will use weapons only for self-defense.

There is an idea to gather together all the opposition parties in Afghanistan and try to assist them in making a coalition government (or transition government) based on parity. The United States and USSR would aid it politically (on a

50/50 ratio). We will push for it: you from the side of Pakistan and the Mujahe-din, we from the side of Najibullah.

The coalition government should be immediately recognized by the United States, the USSR, and Pakistan. Excuses that the U.S. cannot influence the Mujahe-din cannot be taken seriously. The United States can influence Pakistan, and the Mujahedin are powerless without Pakistan. As for our influence on Najibullah, this matter is not so simple. He is not our puppet, as the West is wont to think. He has his own connections and possibilities.

Iran (the matter at hand is the Iran-Iraq war). Let us try the following. What is going on there could hinder the entire process of improving relations. If the situation is any more charged, the consequences could be unpredictable. It will make the internal situation in the United States more difficult and will seriously impact us.

I will say: you invited us to collaborate on Iran and we invited you to collaborate on Afghanistan. But what can we pass it off for? We are using Pérez de Cuéllar's capabilities to move this matter towards settlement. Let us try to work together from this foundation. We need to stop military action if the UN Committee will begin its work.

To pump both camps with weapons is the most dangerous and hopeless affair.

If we speak of a "package," we could do the following: right away we prepare the second resolution of the Security Council and, concurrently, a resolution to exchange the U.S. fleet in the Gulf for a UN fleet. Here we add Afghanistan. We will unite two problems: here, our interests intertwine. We will pacify the entire region this way.

Nicaragua. Let us state that we support Guatemala's proposals and supply the sides with only infantry weapons.

Other observations. The terminology for Afghanistan should be: a neutral, nonaligned, and pluralistic Afghanistan. The term "friendly" is not appropriate. We will be removing advisers from the army, we will leave the hospitals. The Afghanistan-Iran block should be well thought through.

The Middle East. The international conference on the Middle East—everybody is for it. Bilateral relations under the roof of the USSR and U.S. We have no bias against Israel. It is an organic part of the entire process.

Palestine. This is the kernel of the problem. A federation with Jordan is possible. We will not be able to solve the problem without the Palestinians. The process leading to the conference will show us how this will be done. You should influence this process. We will work with Syria and the UN. Our diplomatic relations with Israel are part of the process of general regulation.

The Jewish Question and Soviet-American relations. The key idea is to take this question out of Soviet-American relations. Why it was included there is history. We know with whom we will start a dialogue: with liberal Jewish organizations in the United States. They are knocking at our door. There are some among them who support Jewish national development in the USSR rather than emigration. They want to develop culture, newspapers, theaters, assemblies, religious

communities. How realistic is this? I think it is realistic. The Jews have a strong influence on Middle East affairs and on mass media. This amplifies the significance of the problem.

Someone from our delegation should contact the Jewish organizations in the U.S.

Give a draft of the memorandum to Reagan, so the groups can begin working without waiting for the results from talks at the highest level.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 42: Notes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session

July 9, 1987

Gorbachev announces to the Politburo that the Soviet Union has adopted the double global zero platform, agreeing to destroy its intermediate-range missiles in Asia. (The official public announcement would come on July 23.) He also for the first time formally notifies his colleagues about the decision to add tactical missiles (like SS-23/Oka) to the INF Treaty, justifying the step by saying that it would “deliver a blow” to the “Pershing IBs” stationed in the FRG. In addition, he calls for a third zero—eliminating tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. What is striking here is that he made the exact same commitments to Shultz in April, but at the time Shultz was not able to respond to them, and only after NATO formally adopted the global double zero position on June 12 did Gorbachev present it as his new position at the Politburo. Gorbachev is sensitive to the criticism of his own military about disproportionate Soviet cuts under the INF Treaty. He therefore raises the issue of the imbalance, while noting that even disproportionate cuts would be justified since the intention is to “clear Europe of nuclear weapons.”

Gorbachev. We are moving toward two global zeros on INF and tactical missiles, i.e., we are removing the question of 100 INF missiles in the East. This will make a strong impression on China, Japan, and all of Asia. [...] We will score a huge political victory.

As far as operative-tactical missiles are concerned, by removing them, we are delivering a blow to the seventy-two “Pershing-IBs” (i.e. at the American intention to modernize the Pershings that are already stationed in Europe).⁵⁴ We will put the Americans in a difficult position through our initiative. And we will sell it at a high price. Let them choose how and where they can take a reciprocal step.

About the third zero—the tactical nuclear weapons. Today we have balance with the U.S. both in delivery vehicles and number of warheads.

If one considers types of systems, however, with artillery the picture is more or less the same. But with missiles, we have 1,500, and they have 150. But then they have 1,200 more planes than we do.

Since we are prepared to clear Europe of nuclear weapons, we will reduce them, but on an equal basis, taking the dual-purpose weapons into account. Here we need a general concept.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive*, published in Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, pp. 201–202. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

⁵⁴ *Operativno-takticheskie rakety* refers to SRINF and specifically here to Oka/SS-23. [Editors]

Document No. 43: Memorandum of Conversation between Gorbachev and Shultz

October 23, 1987

In this long and fascinating conversation, attended also by Defense Secretary Carlucci, Ambassador Nitze and Marshal Akhromeyev, Gorbachev tries to show new Soviet flexibility on START by moving closer to the U.S. position on the issues of subceilings and on elements of the strategic triad, including a willingness to introduce a lower level of Soviet heavy ICBMs, laboratory testing of SDI elements, and verification. At the same time, he notes that the U.S. side is trying to “squeeze as much as possible out of us.” Gorbachev’s main objective for the meeting is to get Shultz to agree to draft key provisions for the START Treaty that can be discussed in Washington during his visit. However, Shultz is not persuaded—he would prefer the delegations in Geneva focus on clarifying the issues under dispute and leave the “key provisions” for the principals to discuss at the summit. Gorbachev vents his frustration, twice calling Shultz’s position “foggy.” He complains about the U.S. reluctance to move on arms control, and doubts the genuineness of American support for Soviet domestic changes. No decisions on “key provisions” are achieved by the end of this demanding session; even the dates of the summit are left undecided. The discussion of regional issues is more fruitful as the two sides advance the important dialogue over superpower collaboration in trying to resolve the Iran-Iraq conflict.

Gorbachev. First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you, Mr. Secretary of State. Taking into account the fact that you came here soon after your meeting with E.A. Shevardnadze in Washington, maybe we can say that our relations are becoming more dynamic. We welcome this. The main thing now is substance. And here, as it appears to us, something is emerging.

Shultz. We always want to concentrate our attention on substance. At the same time, it is true that more and more active contacts at higher levels help move work on the substance of important issues further. Therefore, a certain interconnectedness exists between the process of our interaction and progress on concrete issues. I think we can make note of considerable progress on substantive issues. In my toast at breakfast yesterday, I said that in ten years, history will register the fact that in Reykjavik, we achieved more than at any other summit in the past.

Gorbachev. I agree with you. I would say that an intellectual breakthrough took place in Reykjavik, and that it was very powerful, that it had a shocking effect, resembling a reaction at a stock exchange. Later, when many things calmed down, and when people figured things out, it became generally accepted that Reykjavik opened a new, very important stage in the political dialogue between our countries, especially on the most important security issues.

I would like to welcome Mr. Carlucci, who arrived with you. We are hoping that he will make a positive contribution to our search for resolutions on the issues under discussion.

Shevardnadze. Mr. Carlucci made a constructive contribution to our work in Washington.

Gorbachev. Why don't we do the same here?

Shultz. I have worked with Mr. Carlucci since the 1970s, when he was with the government's Office of Economic Opportunity—the organization that works on helping to solve such problems as poverty, assistance to the poor, and so on. Then he worked with me at the Office of Management and Budget. That is the organization whose members constantly reject requests for resources from other government bureaus. Overall, Mr. Carlucci has more extensive experience in various government bureaus than perhaps anybody else. He has worked in the departments of defense and state, in intelligence, and on issues of domestic policy. He has rich experiences and we always work well together.

Gorbachev. Then he should know well that there cannot be any agreement if the interests of the partner in negotiations are not taken into account. I say this because S.F. Akhromeyev and P. Nitze, who are present here, act differently: they want to bargain for better conditions for their side, to achieve superiority for the Soviet Union and for the USA, respectively.

Shultz. I am sure this does not characterize Akhromeyev. It does characterize Nitze.

Akhromeyev. We were able to agree with him on many issues.

Gorbachev. I think that the fact that the military takes part in our meetings is also very important. It shows that our relations have reached a new stage. If we don't intend to fight each other, and more than that, if we are going to disarm, then our militaries should also know each other and work together. [...]

Shultz. We came here with a task and instructions from the president to complete the bulk of our work on the treaty on intermediate and medium-range missiles, i.e. if not to literally dot the last "i," then to reach a stage where it would be sufficiently clear that this task is solvable. The president also proceeds from the assumption that the key issue is strategic weapons. We have also noted your statement to the effect that this is the cardinal problem, as well as another statement in which you said that work on strategic offensive weapons could be completed before spring of next year. We agree with this task and would like to have enough progress to allow us to talk not about INF, but mainly about strategic weapons during your visit to the USA, which we hope will take place, and to establish a foundation for completing our work in this area. This is our goal.

We have clarified a number of issues on INF and SRINF. It relates in particular to the so-called problem of Pershing 1A [missiles] in the FRG, as well as some other issues. We must say that we resolved most of those issues at the ministerial level. A number of issues remain that the working group was working on into the evening and night yesterday. I must say that I was disappointed with that working group's report. I think that we should make them do some serious

work. We hear too many statements that such-and-such issue should be left for consideration in Geneva, to which I say: no, this issue should be resolved here, because the people working in Geneva receive their instructions from Moscow and Washington. Today, the people who can make the appropriate decisions are gathered here, and it is necessary to resolve those issues.

In short, I was hoping to inform you that the main issues of INF and SRINF weapons have been resolved. Unfortunately, I cannot do that. However, I can say that all of these issues seem to be quite resolvable. [...]

Gorbachev. I think Mr. Shultz put it right when he said that the most important issue now is no longer intermediate and shorter-range missiles, but the prospects for resolving the problem of strategic offensive weapons, and shifting negotiations toward practical decisions. As far as the remaining issues of the INF treaty are concerned, they should be resolved in such a way that both of us have complete confidence and there will be no anxiety regarding treaty implementation.

Shevardnadze. Yes, this is precisely the basis on which we should continue the discussions. At the same time we emphasize that the United States has its own system of missile production and deployment, which differs from our system. We have our own system. And today we stated that in order to work out a realistic agreement, it is necessary to take these differences into account.

Shultz. I agree with that. We do not argue with that.

Shevardnadze. I think that on some fundamental issues it is necessary to make a decision now, today. We have to be clear. Otherwise, if we leave these issues open and transfer them to Geneva, they could persist for a long time.

Gorbachev. Yes, the main issues should be decided here, and [we should] leave only technical issues for Geneva. We have the right experience for it.

Shevardnadze. The second group of issues is disarmament. This, as was correctly noted here, consists of the key problem of radical reductions in strategic offensive weapons and the ABM Treaty. In this area, results have been more modest. I would say that it is hard to speak of any results whatsoever. Yesterday I openly told the secretary of state that, after Reykjavik, the Soviet side made substantial changes which took into account the interests of the United States and made significant steps toward the U.S. position. However, precisely after Reykjavik, the U.S. administration added a number of complicating factors to its position, which are causing problems in negotiations and slowing progress on the main issue.

Gorbachev. If we recall our Reykjavik marathon, then it was precisely the issue of ABM in space that became the main obstacle we were not able to overcome in the end. Obviously, you drew the secretary of state's attention to the fact that space remains the biggest obstacle. One also has to note that while we introduced positive elements, elements of flexibility, into our position, the American side continued to stand on its position of reinforced concrete. And it is precisely that position which impedes progress toward agreement on this issue, which is not only central to Soviet-American relations, but is the most important issue for the entire world. How are we going to move ahead?

Shevardnadze. Yes, it was precisely after Reykjavik that the American side brought up new elements in its position that make negotiations more difficult, such as the demand to eliminate all Soviet heavy missiles.

Gorbachev. And by the way, we were ready to eliminate them, but in tandem with you, in tandem with the elimination of all nuclear weapons. [...]

Gorbachev. On this last issue I would like to say the following. It might seem to you that sometimes we present demands against the American side's position that are too great. But here are two instances of principal importance. First of all, we are not sure that you calculated everything well, that you really understand where this policy might lead you, us, and the entire world.

Secondly—although in terms of importance it might be the main issue—we believe that our interaction in the Persian Gulf is the freshest example proving the possibility of constructive cooperation between the USSR and U.S. in resolving a very acute international problem. It was precisely this cooperation that led to the adoption of well-known documents by the [UN] Security Council. We believe, and we have told you this and stated it publicly, that we still have substantial potential there. And we need to use our coordinated positions on Resolution 598⁵⁵ to the fullest extent, [in order] not to allow that situation to escalate to a new level.

However, the United States is apparently offended by the fact that we did not support its demand for sanctions, for a second resolution, and [you] decided to act alone, like in “the good old days.” We believe that the cooperation that has developed there is a positive new factor, and [that it] is important for our overall relations. However, the United States has preferred to throw away this interaction and act alone. I will not talk about the reasons why it happened, but I want to say that your withdrawal from cooperation with us caused disappointment. This political line is wrong. In addition, I repeat that we believe it could have very serious consequences, which you apparently did not consider. We are watching America's actions. For our part, we are searching for ways to improve relations with the U.S., ways to lead them to a new stage.

Shevardnadze. [...] I would like to summarize. The agreement on INF and SRINF no longer looks like a distant possibility. Given mutual desires, I believe it is possible to complete all work on this treaty in, let's say, three weeks' time. As far as the key principles of strategic offensive weapons and ABM are concerned, some serious work is required. But now, regrettably, we do not have a serious basis for resolving the issue of a 50 percent reduction in strategic offensive weapons under conditions of preserving the ABM Treaty. I think that our task is to prepare a serious, solid basis for resolving this problem before the summit.

Shultz. Speaking broadly, we have approximately the same impression. Nothing to argue about here. As far as INF is concerned, I think that we should try

⁵⁵ A key Security Council resolution calling for an end to the Iran-Iraq War. [Footnote in the original]

to resolve the majority of issues on the list prepared by the [working] group today. All that should be left for Geneva is editing work, dotting the last "i's." We would prefer not to leave the resolution of serious issues for Geneva, where participants in the negotiations would have to wait for instructions from Washington and Moscow.

Gorbachev. We would welcome such an approach.

Shultz. As far as strategic weapons are concerned, this is a very important area where we want to achieve some progress. E.A. Shevardnadze told me that you personally devoted a lot of time and attention to these issues, and that you probably have some thoughts, which you yourself will present today. We would like to hear them.

Several words about the Persian Gulf. As you noted, one very good opportunity has emerged: cooperation between us within the framework of UN diplomatic efforts. We want this cooperation to produce results. We believe that it could help resolve this military conflict, which is poisoning the entire international situation. We think that there could be nothing better to strengthen the prestige of the UN than to achieve success in resolving a difficult problem. A success of that kind would be miraculous medicine for the United Nations. Success would show people that if we undertake something, we are capable of achieving our goals.

I would like to assure you that we do not strive to act alone. We want the process to function and work within the UN framework. As far as our ships in the Gulf are concerned, there are now more ships from European states and from the Gulf States there. American ships constitute only a third, or maybe a fourth, of the overall number of ships there. Why do we and others find ourselves there? Because Iran and the war in this region represent a threat—a threat to our friends in the Gulf and to the flow of oil, the main source of energy for countries in the West. We have to support our friends in the Gulf. We have to ensure the safety of the supply of such an important source of energy. Because now and in the future, this region will remain one of the main suppliers of oil for the entire world.

I told your Minister that our forces deployed in the Gulf would be reduced if the severity of the problem is reduced. They are deployed there precisely because of this problem, not to create a permanent presence there. [...]

Gorbachev. I would like to return to what we were discussing earlier. Indeed, we can see that it is not just the tempo of our progress that is accelerating. There is also a certain amount of progress on the concrete issues under consideration. I would say that if one takes a look at progress from Geneva through Reykjavik to today, we have succeeded in clarifying many issues. [...]

In their search for solutions, the sides took concrete steps to meet each other halfway. I must say sincerely: in our view, we took more of those steps. And in you we still detect a tendency to squeeze as much as possible out of us. What can one do, somebody has to do more and take additional steps, and we decided to do it. But this movement gave birth to great expectations among our peoples and the entire world. Therefore, the anticipation that the next stage of our relations

should produce concrete results is completely natural. They have been waiting for them for a long time now. If that does not happen, it would be a big loss both for the American administration and for us. You cannot discount that.

It is from this perspective that I react to reports about the work conducted by you and E.A. Shevardnadze. I have the impression that in the immediate future we could finalize our work on the INF and SRINF agreements. I agree that the principal issues should be resolved here, in Moscow, while leaving our delegations in Geneva only technical, editing issues.

I would even say that if we complete our work like this, it would be very important in and of itself. It would be a very important event in the eyes of the peoples of the world. But then people will rightfully ask: if we understand the importance of that agreement, and if we conclude that agreement in the immediate future, why would we then continue any kind of activity in the sphere of production, testing and deployment of mid-range missiles? Therefore, the right thing to do would be to announce a joint moratorium on such activities. It could be introduced beginning November 1. I repeat, if we have an agreement in principle that we will sign the treaty, then a joint moratorium on deployment and any activities in the sphere of INF would be an important step that would strengthen this political decision. It would show that the agreement would start working *de facto* even before we actually sign it. I think that this important step would determine the degree of our accord on this issue.

Now I move to the central issue—the issue of strategic offensive weapons and space. You recalled my words in connection to this. I confirm those words. We believe that resolution of strategic offensive weapons and space issues would indeed be extremely important for the security of the U.S. and the USSR, precisely because these matters define the strategic situation. Therefore, finding mutually acceptable solutions to nuclear and space questions becomes especially important and pressing.

In Reykjavik we had a serious exchange of opinions on those issues. After Reykjavik we tried to do something to reaffirm our readiness to reach resolutions on the complex of those problems. What is the essence of the mutual understanding reached in Reykjavik? The essence is 50 percent reductions in offensive strategic weapons and 10-year non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. And what is happening in Geneva? Essentially, bargaining is taking place there. Therefore, we have been thinking a lot about what else we could do to move ahead with a resolution to this problem in Geneva. Many issues are being discussed there, a lot is being said. However, if you put it all aside, there are two genuinely big issues: the first is ensuring strict compliance with the ABM Treaty, and the second is the optimal correlation between the elements [that constitute] strategic forces, the strategic triad.

As far as the first issue is concerned, we proposed that the United States not use the right of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for ten years. We also proposed a second version, which is also connected with the idea of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Trying to meet the U.S. halfway, we proposed to discuss which

devices could be deployed in space and which could not. We are waiting for your response.

As far as the second issue is concerned, the issue of optimal correlation between the different elements [comprising] strategic forces, we once more considered this matter carefully. We propose a new formula by which we can determine limits on concentrations of warheads for each element of the triad. Besides, each side would have the opportunity to compensate for the lower number of delivery vehicles of one kind by increasing the number of delivery vehicles of a different kind within the overall limit.

Therefore, we propose [the following]: the United States agrees to undertake an obligation not to use its right of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for ten years under strict compliance with all of its provisions. The Soviet Union agrees to establish limits on concentrations of warheads for different kinds of U.S. and Soviet strategic armaments. Within the [overall] limit of 6,000 warheads, we propose to have no more than 3,000–3,300 warheads on ICBMs, no more than 1,800–2,000 warheads on SLBMs, and no more than 800–900 warheads on air-launched cruise missiles.

We believe that this kind of movement toward each other's positions would lead us to work out key positions on these issues in the short-term. This would prepare the ground for the next step—the move toward concluding the agreement. In that case, as I understand it, when I arrive in the U.S. we create the agenda that we discussed during your visit in April of this year. First of all, we sign the treaty on the elimination of INF and SRINF. Secondly, we agree on the key provisions regarding strategic offensive weapons based on the new compromise proposals. And finally, we incorporate the agreement about initiating negotiations on the issue of nuclear testing that was reached between you and E.A. Shevardnadze. I think that would be a solid agenda.

We see that not everybody in the United States is in favor of such agreements. There are those who wish to undermine this process. They use all kinds of arguments for this purpose, in particular the issue of the Krasnoyarsk radar station. I have to say that we also have complaints about American radar stations. We could remove these complaints on a reciprocal basis. Now I would like to inform you about our unilateral step. The Soviet Union announces a 12-month moratorium on all work at the Krasnoyarsk radar station. We are expecting a similar step from the U.S. in regard to the American radar station in Scotland.

I think that we can take on the issues of strategic offensive weapons and space since they are connected in a substantive, fundamental way.

Shultz. Thank you. I would like to respond to the proposals you outlined. Of course, every time you introduce proposals on important issues, we study and analyze them carefully. Now I can provide you some considerations based on our analysis.

First of all, I welcome what you said about the INF and your words about your readiness to give additional impetus to this work. We are also instructing our representatives so that the main issues will already be resolved in Moscow.

As far as the ABM and related issues are concerned, among other things, we have been trying to clarify what your proposals consist of. We believe there is a certain amount of progress here. I would like to have total clarity as to whether I understand the proposals you presented. This does not presuppose that the President agrees with them. As you know, for him this is a very delicate, sensitive issue. I would like to have an opportunity to present the factual substance of your position to him as precisely as possible. Thus, as I understand it, you propose that we define a ten-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty with strong compliance with the Treaty in the form in which it was developed.

Gorbachev. As it was before 1983. Then we did not have any differences. And besides, that was not just our point of view. That is the point of view of the U.S. Congress. And Congress is, I am convinced, a very serious, very important body, which receives reports, including reports from departments in which Mr. Carlucci has worked, from the National Security Council, in which Mr. Matlock worked at the time, and other detailed information. At that time we shared the same position. [...]

Shultz. I do not want to enter into any secondary arguments right now, because different opinions exist about what was adhered to, how, and what they had in mind. In our country, some people believe, for example, that the Soviet Union insists on an even narrower interpretation of the Treaty than the narrow interpretation itself. I named one document for reference, which your representatives cited, in order to understand your point of view better.

Gorbachev. I repeat: we are talking not only about that, but also about the fact that before 1983 the Treaty was interpreted and effectively enforced by both sides in the same way. If now this creates some difficulties for you, I told the President in Reykjavik that I am ready to help him out of the situation that was created as the result of launching the SDI program. Our proposal—to agree on what can and cannot be deployed in space under conditions of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty—allows [you] to conduct research within the SDI framework. In particular, the second version we proposed presupposes defining concrete parameters for devices allowed to be deployed in space. With that, naturally, it is understood that there should be no weapons in space. But as far as the orders you have already placed with companies and research organizations, they can be carried out within the limits of these agreed-upon parameters. This proposal represents a compromise.

Besides that, we are moving in the direction of your requests regarding limits. For example, when I say that there would be a limit of 3,000–3,300 ICBM warheads within the total limit of 6,000 warheads, this represents 50 percent. This is what I promised the President. As you can see, we are true to our word. [...]

Shultz. I think enough has been said on this issue within the bounds of what can be said at the present stage. I repeat, I was only asking clarifying questions, which do not signify agreement with your proposals on behalf of the President. I believe we should talk directly and openly.

Now another side of the question: how to implement the 50 percent reduction of strategic arms in practice? We believe significant progress has been achieved

on this issue. I would like to present an alternative proposal for your consideration. Realizing that the idea of sub-limits, at least certain kinds of sub-limits, has repeatedly caused problems, in particular during our discussions during my visit in April, we analyzed the situation. Now we have a joint draft text of the treaty, at this point with many brackets. We agreed on a total limit on warheads—6,000. We agreed that the number of delivery vehicles and bombers will be 1,600. We agreed on the limit of warheads on heavy missiles—1,540. We agreed on the rule of counting bombers. We agreed that throwweight would be reduced by 50 percent, and now we would like to achieve a legal affirmation of that in the text of the treaty, as well as a confirmation that after such a reduction in throwweight, there would be no future increases. In principle, I think we have an agreement on this; however, we would like to confirm that in the formulation of the Treaty. One of the limitations, which we proposed, and which was reflected today in your response, is the limitation on the number of warheads on ICBMs—3,300. In Washington you proposed a sub-limit of 3,600 units, but that was proposed as a maximum level for any of the element of the triad.

We believe that the most serious difference between the elements of the triad is the difference between ballistic missiles and warheads that are delivered by air and jet-propelled systems. Of course, land-based missiles are more precise than SLBMs. However, the main distinction is between ballistic missiles and non-ballistic means. Therefore, we would like an agreement to have as a minimum a certain number of warheads in the air-based part of the triad. For this purpose, we propose a limit of 4,800 for ICBM warheads. In the interest of moving forward, we would be ready to remove our proposal about establishing separate sub-limits for ICBM and SLBM warheads in return for your acceptance of the proposal on a summary sub-limit of 4,800 units for ICBM and SLBM warheads. Within this ceiling, each side would be free to determine the constituent parts. [...]

Gorbachev. I think we now have a basis from which to work on key elements of strategic offensive weapons. This could become the central part of the Washington summit because, as far as the agreement on INF and SRINF is concerned, all that remains is signing it. Signing key positions [on strategic weapons] could become the summit's most important outcome. We could give our delegations concrete instructions on the basis of these key positions to work out a draft text of the treaty, which the President and myself could sign during the President's visit to Moscow.

Recently some of your representatives, Mr. Kampelman, for example, said that we need to start seriously developing a treaty on strategic offensive weapons. They said if we could do that, then it would be easier to resolve space issues. I want to say at the outset, this is an unrealistic position, an unrealistic approach. Let's not waste time on such approaches. Issues of strategic offensive weapons and space need to be resolved together because they are interconnected. On this basis, we are ready to move forward, taking each other's security interests into account as much as possible.

Shultz. [...] As far as concrete positions are concerned, I think that our delegations in Geneva should not bargain about numbers so much as emphasize

clarifying each side's principal approaches. We should talk about why you consider certain provisions important, and why we consider other provisions important. I think that would help you and the President find resolutions to those problems during your meeting.

Finally, I would propose that in addition to continuing our work on removing the brackets in the joint text, which is useful, we should focus on the goal of having your meeting with the President result in joint instructions for our delegations in Geneva regarding parameters for the future treaty. I think that would be a good result of the meeting, which would complement the work that will already have been done on coordination of the treaty.

Gorbachev. From the very start I see weak spots in your proposals. First of all, you did not even mention the problem of space. But if we leave this issue outside the boat, then moving ahead on strategic offensive weapons will not make any sense. We have to consider them as interrelated. Why does the American delegation in Geneva avoid discussing space issues, especially discussing the latest Soviet proposals?

Overall, I have the impression that with your three considerations, it is as if you are throwing away the idea of developing key positions on strategic offensive weapons and space. Instead, you propose to limit ourselves to some foggy formulas, talk about the need to clarify positions, etc. Of course, resolution of the verification issue, clarification of positions, removal of brackets—all this is necessary. However, our goal should be the preparation of key positions, which we could consider and sign, so that by the time of the President's visit to Moscow, we would have an agreement on the entire set of issues.

Your approach strikes me as undefined and foggy. In essence, it rejects everything that we said to clarify [our positions] and signal flexibility on concrete problems.

I would like to repeat: we propose that our delegations in Geneva concentrate on developing key positions for adoption during the visit. Then it would make sense. Otherwise, everything is moving beyond the term of the present administration, and that would be too bad, because we want to resolve [these issues] precisely with the present administration. And this is possible. A lot has been done already. And we, as we see it, are capable of concluding a good treaty with the current administration. Only a good treaty: neither one of us needs a bad one.

Shultz. I would not object to defining coordinated positions. I do not want to offer you anything foggy, not at all. I want to look ahead. Some things are already agreed upon, mainly as a result of agreements achieved by you and the President in Reykjavik. The question is what should be done to prepare these key positions [and] instructions for our negotiators. With all respect to our representatives in Geneva, the main, key positions should be adopted by you and the President. Our representatives in Geneva do not have the political mandate for that. But they can prepare the ground, and we can work to prepare the ground for your decisions. That is why I emphasize the need for more precision, for working on issues of verification, especially regarding mobile missiles.

Gorbachev. Let's still prepare a draft of key positions before we, as you propose, start discussing the issues, so to say, in a scattered way.

Shultz. Of course, the more we could move ahead before the summit, the better. The main decision will have to be taken by you and the President. We, as well as you, want the achieved breakthrough to be written in the treaty and receive a practical implementation. It would be very good for you and for us, and would be a gift to the entire world.

Gorbachev. Yes, Reykjavik already has a place in history. But a second Reykjavik will not happen. We should not meet with the President and engage in improvisation. I think it is very good that we stood up for Reykjavik. There were many people who wanted to bury it. But if everything is limited to a second Reykjavik, it might lead to big political losses both for you and for us. And to the contrary, if we find the right political decisions, it would bring both of us great political benefits. You need to decide what you want.

I have the impression that you still cannot decide what it is you want. Maybe it is Ambassador Matlock who informs you in such a manner that you still cannot figure it out? Do you want the Soviet Union to develop successfully, or not? [Do you want] the Soviet Union to develop toward greater democracy or in the opposite [direction]? [Do you want] us to stagnate or move forward?

Shultz. It is your business. It is all up to you to decide, but I can give you my opinion: what is happening in your country is very interesting, and I follow all these changes very closely.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive. Published in Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, nos. 10, pp. 69–81, and 11, pp. 73–84, 1993. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

Document No. 44: Memorandum from Abramowitz to the
Secretary: "Gorbachev's Private Summit Agenda"

November 28, 1987

This two-page cover memo from the head of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to Secretary Shultz summarizes a seven-page INR study looking at "what might be some of the 'wild cards' on the summit agenda." While generally accurate in its assessment of Gorbachev's intentions, even the State Department analysts closest to the Shultz view of Soviet behavior fail to predict several of Gorbachev's surprises during the summit such as the offer on Central America and on conventional forces in Europe. The prediction of "something splashy on Afghanistan" would be off by a few months, but the memo's anticipation of a possible SDI compromise would be only slightly behind Gorbachev's own thinking.

The Soviets are signaling that there are several topics Gorbachev is particularly interested in raising in Washington. Some of these lie outside the formal agenda; many of them are, in the Soviet view, items not just for talks with the President, but for what is shaping up as Gorbachev's efforts to reach out to Congress and the public. We could thus see some surprises or unusual approaches.

The attached INR study examines some of these "wild cards" and the spin Gorbachev may put on the visit and the issues:

- Gorbachev will be conducting a personal reconnaissance of the political landscape in Washington, as well as seeking to shape it to improve the prospects for a productive *follow-up summit in Moscow*.
- As the Soviet leadership puts together the next *Five-Year Plan* (1991-95), outyear constraints on SDI assume increasing significance. The US budget crisis has already given the Soviets some *breathing room on SDI/ABM*. But Gorbachev still has an incentive to strike a deal on START/D&S which will assure a more stable environment in which to plan for the future.
- Gorbachev is sure to focus on *START sublimits* and *D&S compromises*. He will use the momentum of INF and the decision for Joint Instructions to the delegations to push for progress with the prospect of an agreement next spring.
- Gorbachev will press Soviet positions on *CW and SNF*, particularly in his public statements, to rebut Western concerns over post-INF conventional imbalances. He will urge a commitment from the US for early completion of an international ban on CW; Soviet negotiator Nazarkin recently suggested a late May target. Genscher's pressure on NATO to negotiate

reductions in battlefield nuclear weapons gives new life to Soviet calls for a Third Zero in Europe.

- On regional issues, recent Soviet statements strongly suggest they will do something splashy on *Afghanistan* at the summit, perhaps, as they seem to be signalling [sic], committing themselves to a reduced troop withdrawal timetable of under 12 months.
- Gorbachev could resurrect the notion of a US-Soviet *code of conduct* in the Third World or of some kind of new *bilateral consultative mechanism*, on regional or other issues.
- On *trade*, Gorbachev will undoubtedly stress that the USSR is interested in being part of the world economic community and appeal to Congress and the US business community for a reduction in US “discrimination” against the USSR.
- In other areas, Soviet officials have recently indicated a strong interests [sic] in bilateral discussions on restructuring the *United Nations*. Under the rubric of his Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security Gorbachev may push for communique language on UN *peacekeeping* and even *terrorism*. Here, he will be playing more to larger US and world audiences than the Administration. [...]

[Source: U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive (document E46 in Washington INF summit release).]

Document No. 45: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–
Gorbachev, First Meeting, Washington, 10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

December 8, 1987

The road to the Washington summit featured probably the most intense bilateral negotiations to date, covering a great range of issues from human rights to nuclear and conventional weapons. The year 1987 had witnessed substantial progress on all of these issues, mainly due to Gorbachev's willingness to make significant concessions and press for more progress on strategic arms control. U.S. human right pressure, combined with the Soviet desire to show compliance at the Vienna CSCE review conference, produced positive changes in the Soviet domestic practices. Also, in September, Shultz and Shevardnadze signed an agreement to establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers in Washington and Moscow in order to share information that would reduce the risk of accident.

During the photo-op before this first session, the presidents decided to call each other by their first names—Ron and Mikhail—which became their practice from then on. Reagan begins the meeting, as always, by raising human rights issues and giving Gorbachev a list of names of “refuseniks.” After a heated exchange on human rights, the conversation shifts to arms control. At the end of the one-on-one session, Gorbachev raises his domestic concerns about having agreed to unequal INF reductions. Gorbachev's main goal now is to push the Americans to prepare and sign a START Treaty before the end of the Reagan administration. He therefore reminds the U.S. team about the talks in Reykjavik. This prompts Reagan to recall the discussions about eliminating all nuclear weapons before Shultz brings things back to reality, noting that “these approaches [are] no longer a factor in our discussions.” Another major unresolved issue is naval-based nuclear weapons. The U.S. position is that genuine verification is not possible without actual inspection visits to the ships, to which they cannot agree. But since they have just consented to the most intrusive verifiable inspection regime in other areas, Gorbachev cannot believe these assertions and suggests that the U.S. is either hiding its ability to conduct verification aboard ship or does not have the know-how.

Following the welcoming ceremony, the President and General Secretary Gorbachev arrived at the Oval Office at 10:45 a.m. and exchanged pleasantries during a 15-minute photo-op. One-on-one discussions began at 11:00.

The President opened by giving the General Secretary a pair of cuff links, made by an American jeweler, on which was the symbol from Isaiah, the beating of swords into ploughshares. The General Secretary responded that this was indeed an appropriate symbol on a day in which the two leaders would truly be beating swords into ploughshares by signing the first treaty that did this.

The President then said he would like to start with a particular request that the General Secretary consider a list of names of Soviet citizens, a list involving

separated families and other cases. He handed Gorbachev a card listing the names of Soviet citizens to whom he wished the Soviet government to grant exit visas. *The President* then asked that no notes be taken on the American side because he wanted to make a purely personal suggestion in the area of human rights.

Responding to the President's off-the-record point, the *General Secretary* said he wanted the President to understand that the Soviet government considered human rights a priority issue. He said it had not been easy to create unity among the Soviet people after the revolution in a country made up of so many diverse ethnic and national groups. But this had been done. He noted that the USSR was comprised of 15 national republics, each with its own national language, government, press, literature, and culture. And there were, additionally, 38 lesser ethnic groups with autonomous governmental structures, able to develop their own institutions and culture. The question of assuring human rights to a multiethnic population was an important question permanently on the Soviet agenda. There were always problems. Perestroika is dealing with all kinds of problems, not just economic but cultural as well, and the situation was steadily improving.

Turning to emigration, *Gorbachev* said that the USSR was taking a realistic approach to the problem. The President would have noticed this. Some cases were being refused for a time. But Gorbachev wanted the President to understand that the Soviet government would do its utmost to remove this problem from the agenda. He added that he always appreciated the tact with which the President addressed this delicate and sensitive issue; the Soviets react, he said, with great sensitivity when it becomes the subject of political declarations. He repeated his assertion that the human rights situation was improving and that it was a top priority for his government, which was made up of elected bodies representing all nationalities, workers, farmers, intelligentsia, women, young people, all of whose rights were important.

The President noted that the United States was a unique nation whose population all derived from foreign origins. *Gorbachev* said he understood this. *The President* went on to note that some Americans had ties to the Soviet Union. He mentioned that, on the question of religion, while there were different philosophies, even primitive African tribes had some idea of God and worship. He noted that some one-half million Jews sought to leave the USSR for religious-cultural freedom. *Gorbachev* said these figures were completely unconfirmed.

Gorbachev then challenged the President whether there were any human rights problems in the United States. *The President* admitted we had our problems because people are people, but that our Constitution protected basic human rights. *Gorbachev* proposed a seminar of experts to debate the matter, adding that he could not share the President's positive assessment of the human rights picture in the United States. *The President* responded that anybody can leave the US, and Gorbachev, in turn, that this was not the only human right. The Constitution protects freedom of worship, said the President. But what about episodes of anti-Semitism in the United States, queried Gorbachev. The President observed that individuals have their prejudices, to which Gorbachev agreed.

But, *the President* said, over the previous weekend 200,000 individuals had gathered to demonstrate on human rights in the USSR. *Gorbachev* acknowledged this and repeated that the USSR considered the matter to be serious and important, which is why it had decided to discuss it with the US government. He repeated his proposal to convene a joint seminar on it, and suggested that this discussion be closed. Responding to another reference from *the President* to freedom of worship, *Gorbachev* proposed that the President visit the USSR in June 1988 when the Millennium of Christianity in Russia would be celebrated. Representatives of many religious denominations would come. The President could visit churches of numerous Christian denominations in the USSR and see for himself what was happening. However, *Gorbachev* said, he would not sit as the accused before a prosecutor.

The President said he meant no threat by his line of argument. The *General Secretary* said he felt no threat, but that all countries had laws regarding immigration and emigration. *The President* responded that few restricted the right to leave their country. Many peoples wanted to come to the United States and we could not receive them all, but governed their entry under a system of quotas. *Gorbachev* said if quotas on immigration are acceptable, why not quotas on emigration? Why, he asked, does the United States guard the border with Mexico with fences and guns? What kind of democracy is this?

The US-Mexican border was completely the reverse of the situation on Soviet borders, replied *the President*. Because of poor living conditions in Mexico many wanted to come to the US; we could not absorb them all. The President reiterated that the fundamental point was that the USSR prevented people from getting out, that it compelled them to stay.

Gorbachev said he was willing to continue discussing these and other problems, but not today. He and the President agreed to move on.

Gorbachev observed that the two leaders had covered a long road from their first to this third meeting between them, a road marked by important and difficult issues. During that time, their dialogue had become much more profound, had begun to contain elements of trust between the two parties. There was an improved ability to address questions quietly and productively, a greater willingness to deal with political responses on each side, and political will to move ahead.

The President recalled an episode in Geneva when staff experts who had been working in another building came to the two leaders to report roadblocks in their efforts. *Gorbachev* continued the recollection by reminding the President how the leaders had urged progress by pounding their fists on the table; *the President* recalled this too. *Gorbachev* noted that this had been an important political moment illustrating how bureaucrats, sometimes very intelligent ones, forget who is really in power. People elect leaders while officials are merely appointed.

Gorbachev said it was not oversimplifying to claim that there had been a true change for the better in US-Soviet relations. Exchanges and discussions resolving important problems were underway. We would now sign the first agreement ever eliminating nuclear weapons, a fact of historic importance. We recognized, he said, that the process was not easy, that we had different views. Questions

were being asked about prospects for ratification. The *General Secretary* said he was himself being asked to explain why the Soviet Union was to dismantle four times the number of weapons NATO and the US side would. He said he would succeed in explaining the value of the treaty to the Soviet people as the President would to the American people. He then referred to a letter from a student pleading that he and the President not become captives of emotion.

The President suggested that ministers be invited to join the meeting at this point. The *General Secretary* agreed. *The President* said that he and the General Secretary were doing something very important for the future of the child who had written the letter. *Gorbachev* said he personally felt that a very important aspect of the current steps being taken in the US-Soviet relationship was the mental or psychological change being made in the minds of men, which he deeply felt. *The President* agreed. This had somehow to be captured, responded the General Secretary.

The President expressed gratitude to *Gorbachev* for his efforts in improving a relationship that was far from easy. *Gorbachev* agreed that striving for cooperation was not easy, but that we should not be afraid to do it. He expressed pleasure at the President's remarks at the welcoming ceremony. He expressed the view that, if there was no gap between what the President said and the actions that were taken, then there would be practical progress and he would find the Soviet side to be a good partner.

The President mused that, were we confronted with a hostile threat from another planet, then our differences would disappear and we would be totally united. *Gorbachev* recalled having discussed this idea before. At this point Shultz, Shevardnadze, Baker, Yakovlev, Powell, and Dobrynin joined the meeting. Launching into a general statement on next steps in arms control, the *General Secretary* expressed thanks to the people who had worked on the INF Treaty. He said the signing of this treaty radically changed the whole situation, activated the discussion, and increased international pressure for new progress. The momentum had to be maintained and, along with the experience gained, to be applied to the problem of reducing strategic offensive forces. In this context, he noted that the two sides had agreed at Reykjavik on a 50% reduction of strategic offensive forces and on nonwithdrawal from the ABM Treaty for period of 10 years. After Reykjavik the US side raised the issue of sublimits within the framework of 6000 strategic nuclear warheads. The Soviet side had sought to accommodate, accepted the concept of sublimits, and had offered proposals on the distribution of forces among the various legs of the triad. The US side had special concerns, specifically regarding Soviet heavy ICBMs. For its part, the Soviet side had concerns about US SLBM forces. Both sides were taking account of each other's concerns. Secretary Shultz had been given a new Soviet proposal on sublimits in Moscow and had been asked to respond in Geneva. The General Secretary turned to Secretary Shultz and asked again what was the US position.

The President stated that he wanted to react to one of the General Secretary's points, namely, the 10-year delay regarding defenses both sides were planning.

The President said he would like to see that period shortened a bit. He did not have in mind a sharp cut because there were technical limits to what is possible, but the US side felt it might be able to push defensive research to permit deployment a few years earlier. He felt, however, that the differences between the two sides on this and on sublimits could be negotiated.

Secretary Shultz asked to review the range of arms reduction problems which the sides would try to resolve during the visit of the Soviet leader. He began by noting, as Gorbachev had, areas of agreement following Reykjavik: A reduction to 6000 strategic nuclear warheads, 1600 launchers/delivery vehicles, and a limit of 154 heavy ICBMs with 1540 warheads. *Gorbachev* interjected that the latter figure was a 50% cut when the US had originally only asked for 35%. *Secretary Shultz* noted that the US welcomed this, adding that these limits would include a 50% cut in Soviet throwweight. *Gorbachev* again interjected his agreement. *Secretary Shultz* said that these areas of agreement should now be incorporated in a treaty with the understanding that Soviet missile throwweight would fall 50% and not go back up.

Secretary Shultz continued, observing that bomber counting rules had been agreed by Nitze and Akhromeyev at Reykjavik. We had now to devise necessary counting rules for other weapons—warheads on missiles, cruise missiles on aircraft, etc., subjects on which we had proposals which working groups could address. *Gorbachev* interjected that there were some related questions of principle to discuss.

Secretary Shultz said that, regarding vital issues of verification, we should advance using the principles established in INF and instructing our negotiators on the basis of those principles. *Gorbachev* agreed. Then, the Secretary continued, the various sublimits had to be addressed, among which the most important was the ballistic missiles sublimit within the 6000 allowed warheads. In Moscow, the Soviet side had stated a proposal for 800–900 ALCMs. The other side of this idea from the Soviet side was Marshal Akhromeyev's proposal of 5100 warheads on strategic ballistic missiles. The Secretary said the US thought this too many; 4800 was a better level, but the concept was important and we seemed to be agreeing on that. *Gorbachev* interjected that the Soviet side had a compromise proposal. *Secretary Shultz* noted that this was an important statement. *Gorbachev* objected laughingly that the Secretary had not even heard the Soviet proposal yet, but could be assured that the Soviet side was looking for a compromise. *The Secretary* suggested 4803 as a good compromise. In the same jocular fashion, the *General Secretary* responded, that this number would be capitulation, not compromise; whereupon he turned to the President to take up his earlier remark about a 10-year period of nonwithdrawal from the ABM Treaty being too long. Why was the US side moving away from the 10-year period discussed at Reykjavik, asked *Gorbachev*. So much had been agreed there and then the US side retreated. Why?

Secretary Shultz reminded *Gorbachev* that US acceptance of a 10-year nonwithdrawal period was conditioned at Reykjavik on total elimination of ballistic missiles in the same period. *The President* recalled that even elimination of

all nuclear weapons was discussed at Reykjavik. But these approaches were no longer a factor in our discussions, concluded *Shultz*. We could work on defining the period of nonwithdrawal. *Gorbachev* asked what period the US was now proposing. That, replied *the Secretary*, would depend on other aspects of the negotiation. *General Secretary Gorbachev* agreed to set these subjects (START and ABM) aside for the moment, but noted that there was a linkage between them and that this remained an issue of principle for the Soviet side.

The President asked the General Secretary to humor him a bit by letting him see the deployment of advanced strategic defenses in his lifetime. *Gorbachev* replied by observing how healthy the President was and opined that he had many active years ahead of him. If we made the right decisions, he continued, we would see good results in our lifetime and our children would see them beyond us. But if we continued in the manner of the past 45 years there would be no such progress.

Gorbachev noted that Secretary Shultz had raised the issue of SLCMs, which had been discussed at Reykjavik in a special framework outside the 6000 warhead limit. Now that our positions were coming closer on a whole range of issues, the matter of SLCMs became particularly significant. It was not settled yet, but to prevent circumvention there would have to be a limit, something like 400 would be worthy of discussion. The nature of SLCMs and the problems they posed had changed considerably in the years since the SALT negotiations addressed them. *Gorbachev* asked what particularly bothered the US side in coming to grips with the SLCM problem.

Secretary Shultz replied that the verification problems posed by SLCM limits were very difficult, particularly distinguishing between those with nuclear and those with conventional warheads because the two looked exactly alike. But the US side was prepared to discuss this because it recognized the importance of the matter. The Secretary knew that *Akhromeyev* had some thoughts on the subject of verifying SLCMs and the US was prepared to hear them.

The General Secretary said that to focus things he wanted to introduce some new points about SLCMs. First, he repeated, there had to be a limit on their numbers. Second, the Soviet side had insisted that they had to be restricted to two types of submarines only. But, because the US had so many types of surface ships that could carry SLCMs, the Soviets were prepared to agree that they also could be deployed on two types of surface ships as well. Third, *Gorbachev* would address verification. Both sides, he insisted, had the technical means to verify SLCMs, the equipment that would allow determination of whether nuclear weapons were aboard a ship and what yield they were, without actually boarding the ship. This was what *Akhromeyev* had alluded to. Now either the US was concealing its capability, continued *Gorbachev*, or it lagged in such capability to verify nuclear weapons aboard ships. If the former, this would be bad; if the latter, then the Soviet side would sell the technology to the US—if the price were right. In any case, the technology existed to permit identifying the presence and yield of nuclear weapons aboard ships, said *Gorbachev*. Thus, we could work out

limits on SLCMs, establish that they would be deployed only on two types of submarines and two types of surface ships, and work out [sic] technical details of verification.

Secretary Shultz repeated the interest of the US side in hearing what the Soviets had to say, but wanted to register considerable skepticism about verification of SLCM limits. *Gorbachev* offered to conduct a demonstration to prove the verifiability of such limits by technical means, to which *the Secretary* responded that it was too easy to switch warheads on SLCMs to make such a demonstration really convincing. *Gorbachev* repeated his insistence that suitable technology was indeed available, a matter that had been discussed with Paul Nitze. Both sides had verification concerns but they were resolvable. Again *Shultz* noted the willingness of the US side to listen but advised that not just Paul Nitze, but a lot of skeptical admirals had to be convinced.

In approaching these questions, the *General Secretary* said, we had to involve scientists more in our work, to provide a broad basis for realistic policy. He said that Western scientists had complained that their knowledge was not being adequately used in these areas. He had a letter from a British Nobel prize winner proposing an East-West commission of scientists to advise both the President and the Soviet leadership more reliably. Without scientists there could be no solutions to our problems.

The President noted the late hour, and *Secretary Shultz* remarked that it might be time for a larger meeting in the Cabinet Room. But first the Secretary wanted to make another point or two to guide working group activity. With regard to mobile missiles, he said, the US had no problem in principle with allowing them. But the verification problems were exceptionally difficult and the working group had to focus on them.

Gorbachev agreed with the President that it was about time to break off this part of the meeting, but he too wanted to add one more point, on nuclear testing. He noted that we were now negotiating about new limits on testing as part of a process leading to nuclear disarmament. This was good; we had momentum. We had already decided to exchange visits of monitoring experts and to conduct experiments in yield measurement. He had an idea he wanted the President and others to think about. Since the negotiations now underway were aimed at the ultimate result of a total prohibition on all nuclear testing, why not, now, declare a bilateral moratorium on testing for the duration of these negotiations. This would be an act of enormous importance the whole world would support. He asked that the President and his colleagues not respond immediately to this idea but think it over carefully. Then noting that time was short and the matter of forging instructions to negotiators for future arms talks paramount, he passed to the President a Soviet paper containing the tentative proposals of the Soviet side, as discussed at the last ministerial in Geneva. *The President* passed to the General Secretary a comparable US document covering START and Defense and Space issues.

At the close of the meeting the two sides agreed that there would be two basic working groups, one on arms control chaired by Nitze and Akhromeyev and

one on other parts of the agenda chaired by Ridgway and Bessmertnykh. Further, *Secretary Shultz* proposed that, in briefing the press, both sides stick to general statements about the atmosphere and topics of discussion. *Gorbachev* agreed, noting some concern as to whether the US side would stick to this. *The Secretary* insisted that we always did.

The meeting concluded with the President giving the General Secretary a tour around the Oval Office. The Soviet party departed at 12:30 p.m.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Library*, obtained through Mandatory Review request M00-02 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 46: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–
Gorbachev, Second Meeting, Washington, 2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

December 8, 1987

In the second session of the summit, the leaders turn to conventional and chemical weapons. Gorbachev reminds Reagan about the step-by-step process of arriving at the INF Treaty they have just signed, hoping to use this successful experience as a model. On chemical weapons, Gorbachev admits that the initial Soviet position was problematic but says that it has changed and that now the United States is dragging its feet. He suggests that the U.S. binary weapons program might be the problem. He also disagrees with the American position that only state facilities could be inspected. Shultz is non-committal on chemical weapons, repeating several times that it is a very difficult problem, especially in terms of verification because, as Reagan commented, “any country with a fertilizer plant” could make them. On conventional weapons in Europe, Shultz prefers to place these talks within the Vienna CSCE mandate along with human rights, arguing that “it was the Helsinki framework which held all these things.” Gorbachev strongly objects to the idea, which he sees as linkage of the Jackson-Vanik variety. He insists instead that conventional weapons should be discussed in separate negotiations. Returning to INF, Gorbachev warns Reagan and Shultz about any thoughts of “how to compensate for the elimination of INF missiles in Europe. If such thinking prevailed, it would be very dangerous,” and all their achievements would be lost. He essentially anticipates the Bush administration’s efforts in Spring 1989 to persuade its European allies to modernize the Lance missile (FOTL). In the second part of the meeting, the conversation turns to domestic reform in the Soviet Union and specifically to glasnost. Reagan encourages further Soviet democratization. Gorbachev assures his counterparts that his reform will proceed in the desired direction but asks them “to let the Soviet side do it their own way.”

The President suggested the two leaders take up their discussion where it had left off.

Gorbachev said he would complete his presentation of that morning by adding a few words, with the President’s permission.

The President invited him to do so.

Gorbachev said he believed the President felt like him and their colleagues following the signing (of the INF Treaty). The two sides had begun to discuss the key problem of reducing nuclear weapons. There was also the concern about conventional and chemical weapons. This was becoming very important. It was coming to the forefront of concern. He did not wish to overdramatize. There was no need to panic. But the Soviet side was in the process of assessing whether harm was being done to equality, to the balance of security. They had been listening to what was being said in Europe. They had the feeling in Moscow that it was

hoped in Europe that we would give due attention to chemical weapons, to conventional weapons. The President and he should discuss this. They should give instructions to their colleagues to move forward.

Turning first to conventional weapons, Gorbachev recalled how the two sides had begun the process of eliminating medium-range and shorter-range missiles. The President had recalled in his remarks that he had put forward the zero option. Gorbachev said he had thought the President would then say the Soviets had appropriated the idea for themselves. But the President had put the thought in more sophisticated fashion. Gorbachev had noticed that.

But, Gorbachev went on, when they began to discuss this question there was the issue of British and French arms. They had debated it. The Soviet side had decided to set it aside. Then they had discussed missiles in Europe and in Asia. At Reykjavik it had been decided each side could retain 100 warheads, with the Soviet warheads in Asia. Later they had decided to go to complete zero. They had moved step by step. All these things had gone into the treaty the two sides had just signed.

This experience should not only help with strategic offensive arms discussions, Gorbachev continued. It should also help with conventional weapons. In the West it was said that the Soviet Union had a superiority in armed forces and weapons. In the East it was said that NATO had a superiority in weapons. And both sides were right. Each side had the data proving its case. The two sides should agree to sit down. They should see who was trying to outsmart whom, and who was serious. They should look at the asymmetries. It should be a process; they should go step by step.

Gorbachev went on that the President and he should decide to move forward toward a mandate for negotiations between the two alliances. Perhaps they should lock their negotiators in a room. They could give them food, of course, but they would instruct them to prepare proposals. Some were saying that the Soviet Union should take certain steps even before this had been done. They said the Soviet Union had an advantage in Central Europe. No one talked about NATO's advantages in Southeastern Europe, which existed, and in an area close to the Soviet borders.

This should be put in the final document (of the Summit), Gorbachev said. They should put their cards on the table. They should think of first steps to lessen confrontation. There was the concept of corridors, of thinning out forces in certain corridors. There was the question of discussing military doctrines. They should seek a common concept of sufficiency, sufficiency for defensive purposes. He would not expand on this list. But the atmosphere created by signing the treaty was not less important than the treaty itself. The two leaders should talk about what he had suggested. This would be well received by the allies of both countries, and in Europe generally.

Turning to chemical weapons, Gorbachev said that at a certain point the British had made a valuable initiative. The Soviet position had in fact been a certain hurdle. The Soviet side therefore took major decisions. After that work went

forward toward a convention to ban all these weapons, among all the participating countries, including the United States.

Then there came a slowdown, Gorbachev went on. As the Soviets saw it, someone was holding back the process. It could be either the Soviet Union or the United States. The Soviets knew it was not they. They had stopped production of these weapons. They were building, in fact completing, a facility to destroy them. It was not the Soviet side that was slowing things down. Perhaps it was the U.S. side. Perhaps there were some concerns on the U.S. side. Maybe it was the binary weapons program. The U.S. had already funded production of 155 mm shells.

Verification was also very important, Gorbachev continued. The U.S. was still proposing verification only of state facilities. That would include all the Soviet Union's, but not all the U.S.'s. There was no equality there.

Gorbachev concluded that the final document (of the Summit) should express a common view that would make it possible to give momentum to the negotiating process. This would enrich their meeting. It would be welcomed by the peoples of Europe, the peoples of the world.

He had wished to raise these two questions, Gorbachev said, by way of concluding their initial meeting. He could confine himself to this at that point.

The President said he did not think anyone on the U.S. side did not favor more disarmament. The U.S. side thought the main priority should be to move forward in START. But if we continued on that path, we would face the question of short-range, or battlefield, weapons. It would only be possible to eliminate them if we had first restored a balance in conventional weapons. The two sides should find a way to move forward on this. But, he recalled, it was not armaments that created distrust, but distrust that created armaments.

Gorbachev commented that confidence could not grow in an empty place. The arms control process would help it grow. That was dialectics, under the Marxist approach.

Secretary Shultz said that the U.S. side wanted to work with what had been said at that meeting, about conventional weapons, about chemical weapons. That was desirable. But the question was not so much one of language as of content.

The U.S. side would like to see the mandate being worked on in Vienna finished as soon as possible, the Secretary continued. It was pretty well along. In the framework of the Vienna talks there was also discussion of human rights. The Soviet side had made proposals, the U.S. side had made proposals. It was the Helsinki framework which held all these things together. So the two sides needed to deal with all these aspects. The U.S. side wanted to do that. Then, as Gorbachev had said, the sides should proceed on to deal with the asymmetries. They should try to move toward an equal situation at lower levels. The U.S. side had some ideas. Perhaps they would parallel those of the Soviet side.

Like the Soviet side, the U.S. side made a point of moving forward as a member of an alliance, the Secretary continued. This was not something the U.S. and the Soviet Union could just do together. Most of the arms under discussion on the

Western side belonged to U.S. allies. But it was true that the U.S. and the Soviet Union had important parts, and could energize things.

Gorbachev said he supported what Secretary Shultz had said concerning the linkage to allies. The working group should work on this topic during the visit. They should develop ideas. When they had done so, the two sides should consult with their allies. Then Carlucci and Soviet Defense Minister Yazov could meet. This would move the process forward.

Secretary Shultz said he was all for meetings between defense officials of the two sides. But we had to be careful about acting as if the U.S. and Soviet sides could work things out, and then consult with allies. We could not have that. It would not work. The allies see the importance of the issues, but the two sides needed to go about it right. But they should come to grips in Vienna with all the topics that had been discussed. This meant not only a mandate for negotiations on conventional weapons but also a mandate for confidence building measures. They should get that done, in the early part of the next year.

Gorbachev said the two sides had a common view that the topic was important, and he agreed we should not rush, but he had reservations when he heard Shultz say it. The Warsaw Treaty Organization had put proposals on the table eighteen months ago. It had still not received an answer. As he had told the President, he had not come to Washington to bicker, but to do real politics. At the stage we were at, recriminations and complaints just served to delay things. *Gorbachev* pointed to the main negotiators, sitting at the back of the room. They had felt this on their skins, he said. One needed to be persistent to succeed.

Gorbachev continued that with regard to substance the U.S. side had said there was generally agreement. But he had one question. He did not want to link conventional disarmament to Helsinki. Helsinki included many things, human rights and other things. We should tackle conventional disarmament straight on. We should not make a package. The U.S. had made Jackson-Vanik fifteen years before. That was a package, and over fifteen years the U.S. had been unable to untie it.

Secretary Shultz said the U.S. side was prepared in the working group to discuss conventional arms in relation to the CSCE process. Our Ambassador at Vienna, Warren Zimmermann, would be there. Perhaps a subgroup could be formed to work on this problem.

Gorbachev suggested that the formulation in the statement could stress cooperation with allies; that was important. *Secretary Shultz* said *Gorbachev* had better believe it. That was, *Gorbachev* added, if the chairman agreed. *The President* said he did.

Gorbachev asked about chemical weapons. *The Secretary* said this was a more severe problem. For fifty years there had been a moral consensus against them. This had been broken. It was important to try to put it back together.

Gorbachev asked if the Secretary were referring to the 1925 Convention. *The Secretary* said that he was. It had worked, more or less. Actually, the fact that some countries had possessed these weapons had probably had some

deterrent effect. But there were now many countries which had or could have them. They had been used in the Iran-Iraq war. At the same time there was the problem of verification. There was a need for a broad consensus. But it would be hard to get.

The U.S. side thus saw both the urgency and the difficulty of the issue, the Secretary said. There was real work to do. The two sides had had excellent discussions on the topic, in the content of his meetings with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. The U.S. side wanted to see progress. But it had no illusions. He suggested that they have their people work on it. This could be reflected in any statement. But the problem was genuinely difficult.

Gorbachev asked if the U.S. side saw the goal, for the two sides and for others, as speeding up the drafting of the convention. *Secretary Shultz* said it did, as long as we went about it realistically.

The President commented that any country with a fertilizer plant could make chemical weapons. It was an almost impossible task to know that they are not being made. *Secretary Shultz* said we thus had an impossible but necessary task. Chemical weapons were potentially very destabilizing. *Gorbachev* said there was no cause for panic.

Gorbachev continued that he wished to draw the President's and the Administration's attention to another issue. The Soviet side had noticed that in European political and journalistic circles there was discussion of how to compensate for the elimination of INF missiles in Europe. If such thinking prevailed, it would be very dangerous. The two sides should interact and take a common stand. There could be new weapons, of great new capacity. If all the talk of reinforcing or adding new forces in Europe became true, the whole process would be more difficult. This was especially true since they had agreed to eliminate INF missiles over a certain period of time.

(At this point, at 3:00 p.m., Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr A. Bessmertnykh and Disarmament Department Director Viktor Karpov took their places at the table.)

The President commented that it was here that we needed to take the most steps to create trust. There was a legacy of mistrust because of Soviet expansionism. *Gorbachev* commented that compared to American expansionism the Soviet side's was a small child. *The President* responded that the U.S. side did not think so. There had been four wars in his lifetime, and the U.S. had not gained an inch of territory.

Under the U.S. system, the President continued, it was not enough just to say something. You had to do something. We had people here from every part of the world. There was thus a kind of dual loyalty. The first question asked was what you were; more and more people had to name three or four places. There was a pride in where one's parents and ancestors were from. They were proud of them, as well as of being American. So there were elements in our country that had big resentments over what happened where they had come from. Signing the treaty was therefore not enough. There was also the question of getting it ratified.

Gorbachev said the Supreme Soviet was even larger than the Senate. It had some 2000 members. He expected ratification would be a sharper process than usual. It opened up many questions. There was the question of why the Soviets had been so generous toward the Americans. They were eliminating four times as many missiles. But it used to be that parity had been recognized. So the question was why it was being broken. The Soviets would need to tackle this even before the formal ratification process. It was not easy to take the first step toward disarmament. People asked how it was possible to have disarmament with the U.S. when the Soviet Union was ringed with U.S. bases. People asked how *Gorbachev* could bow down to the U.S., and do more.

Gorbachev continued that he had just seen a recent Gallup poll in the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It had been an independent poll. It had shown that there were not many enthusiasts for the treaty in the Soviet Union. About half the Soviet people had expressed certain doubts. After all the Soviet government had said the principle should be equal security. That was one reason why he had brought Dobrynin along; he was head of a commission in the Supreme Soviet. So was Ligachev. But he thought he would have Dobrynin with him.

The President said that *Gorbachev's* comments underlined the need for trust. If *Gorbachev* genuflected before him, he would stomp his foot. *Gorbachev* said he was not referring to himself personally. He was one thing. But pride was a matter for a nation. He represented a nation. We had to deal with each other on the basis of equality, of respect, of taking each other's concerns into account. We needed to make real policy.

The U.S. side accused the Soviet side of all sorts of sins, *Gorbachev* went on. What was needed was to look forward instead. During the forty-five years since the War so much had piled up that if we just went on with complaints—on the Soviet side there were all sorts of doctrines to complain about, the Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine—we would put each other on trial. This was not the constructive policies people wanted. *Gorbachev* advised the Vice President to reflect on that. Unless policy reflected what people wanted, you could win an election, but not succeed in the long term.

The President commented that the U.S side welcomed moves toward democratization in the Soviet Union, toward glasnost.

Gorbachev replied that he wished to say a few words about that. It was people's greatest wish to go to bed and wake up in the morning to see everything changed for the better. But even in fairy tales the heroes had to go through trials, and in real life things were even harder. He would continue to fight conservatism. He would continue to fight those who sought to shackle people in dogma. But he would also fight adventurists. There were the equivalent of the Red Guards in China, who wanted to push ahead without thinking.

It would not be easy, *Gorbachev* said. But the present leadership had taken a firm stand to move along that path. Certain politicians, perhaps Matlock, were looking for an opposition. There was opposition, in every single Soviet. It would be foolish to deny it. They were children of their times. But of political

opposition there was none. There would be debates. There would be differences of views and exchanges of views. But he could assure the President and his colleagues that the Soviet side would be moving ahead toward democratization. That was, if the U.S. would permit them to do so. He asked the American side to let the Soviet side do it their own way.

The President said there was a U.S. President who had once said something very profound. That was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In America there had also been people who had thought that government should have more control of people. Roosevelt had asked where, if people did not have the capacity to run their own lives, we would find among them the tiny group that could run not only their own lives but those of others.

He did not want to offend Gorbachev, the President continued, but he had recently talked to a U.S. scholar who had visited Gorbachev's country. On his way to the airport he had had a taxi driver, a young man finishing his education but also driving a taxi because he needed money. The professor had asked the young man what he was going to be; he had replied that he had not yet decided. The professor got to the Soviet Union, and there he had had basically the same conversation, with a taxi driver finishing his education, but also driving a taxi. When he had been asked what he would be, he had replied: "They haven't told me yet."

Gorbachev said he knew the President liked anecdotes about the Soviet Union. It was indeed a country rich in anecdotes. He had only one request: that the President not ask Matlock to collect anecdotes for him. This would stop relations entirely; that would be the biggest joke.

Secretary Shultz asked if he could get a word in edgewise. People were waiting for the working groups to start. There had been discussion of strategic arms that morning. Notes had been exchanged; there were things to work with. Gorbachev and the President had also had a discussion about conventional and chemical weapons, so that was additional material. There was one area that had not been touched on. Perhaps they could reach it the next day. That was regional issues. (*Gorbachev* interjected agreement.) Here the *Secretary* assumed the working group would plow in without guidance from the leaders' discussion.

Gorbachev said he would welcome that. Bessmertnykh and Ridgway knew their respective positions. *The Secretary* joked that the problem was that they knew the positions of both sides.

Gorbachev said the Soviet side intended to conduct a more businesslike discussion of regional issues with the President and his colleagues. But there was too little time for it that day. They could get into it the next day.

Secretary Shultz said that as self-appointed housekeeper, he might also mention the nuclear testing statement as something to issue the next day. It would be good to have a continuing flow of things out of the meeting. *Gorbachev* said the two sides should look at it.

Gorbachev said he had made a note to himself that morning. His thought was that in discussing the ABM Treaty, where the two sides agreed on a non-withdrawal period, they should say not only, as the Soviet proposal had it, that if

one side violated the ABM Treaty the other side would have the right to resume increasing offensive weapons, but that if one side violated it the other side would have the right to end its moratorium on ASAT weapons, i.e. not only to resume production of offensive arms but also to resume ASAT production. That would be an equal obligation for both sides.

Secretary Shultz said it was not clear to him what Gorbachev meant by a moratorium on ASAT. *Gorbachev* said the Soviet side had been observing such a moratorium since 1983; of course it was unilateral. *The Secretary* said that our moratorium was imposed by Congress. *Gorbachev* said he knew that; but in actual fact it was a moratorium. *The Secretary* said he now understood what Gorbachev was driving at.

Secretary Shultz continued that in his view the ABM Treaty deserved discussion in the working group, and perhaps also back at the main table: the President had important thoughts on it.

Gorbachev asked if they should call it a day for the time being. Or perhaps the President wished to make suggestions on strategic weapons that day. *The President* replied that he did not.

The Secretary asked if it were agreed to begin the arms control working group at 4:00 p.m. *Shevardnadze* asked if it would take place at the State Department, and the *Secretary* confirmed that it would.

Gorbachev concluded that in the previous two hours they had made an important event. It was a bridge to the future. The Soviet side was ready to build it over. By the time the President came to Moscow the two sides of the bridge should be locked together. *The President* said they should meet in the middle. *Gorbachev* said he agreed fully.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 47: Record of Conversation between Akhromeyev
and Nitze at the U.S. State Department, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

December 8, 1987

In the first conversation of this summit between the leaders of the military working groups, Marshal Akhromeyev outlines the Soviet position on the strategic nuclear weapons negotiations. The main point is the linkage between ABM compliance and START issues. Another subject is verification, on which the Soviets are now prepared to go further than the Americans in their reversal of traditional positions. When Akhromeyev offers on-site inspections to count the number of bombs deployed on each bomber, Nitze responds: "We cannot agree to that." The discussion also covers issues related to counting Soviet "Backfire" bombers and U.S. sea-launched cruise missiles.

Nitze. I propose an exchange of opinions regarding what we hope to achieve on the question of SNF [strategic nuclear forces]. It seemed that in Geneva we had common goals. We propose finding new areas in which we can reach agreement and reflect this in the joint statement. We have to promote the success of our delegations' work in Geneva, and for this they need appropriate instructions. In order to work out a coordinated text for the agreement, we need to concentrate on studying unresolved questions.

I propose trying to resolve our differences on specific questions that should be included in the joint statement. Here is the text in English (he hands the text of the American proposal to S.F. Akhromeyev).

Akhromeyev. Allow me to say a few words. As the result of the first and second talks between the General Secretary and the U.S. President, four questions formed which we are assigned to consider:

- reducing SNF;
- compliance with the ABM Treaty in relation to the SNF problem;
- reducing armed forces and weapons in Europe;
- liquidating chemical weapons.

If there are no objections, we will concentrate on discussing these questions.

Nitze. There are no objections, but I would like to discuss the issues of conventional and chemical weapons tomorrow at the working group meetings.

Akhromeyev. I think that we should still start with the abovementioned main issues and later transfer them for discussion to our representatives. On my part, I would like to give you the text of our proposals, which the General Secretary gave to Mr. President today. (He gives P. Nitze the Soviet proposal.) We also prepared a list of questions for which we would like explanations. Specifically,

the questions were formed based on Cde. Bessmertnykh's report on his conversation with you. We could begin the discussion from any draft, if you would like we could start with the American proposal, but first I would like to have it read aloud.

(The American interpreter reads the translation of the American document).

Without going into the main content of the document, I would like to note that it omits two major questions: first, the question of correlation between the reduction of strategic offensive weapons and each side's observance of the ABM Treaty in the form signed in 1972; secondly, the question of limiting development of sea-based long-range cruise missiles. These aspects are missing completely from the American side's proposals. The issues are of such nature that, knowing our position, you could not have accidentally left them out. I would like to hear your position on these issues, Mr. Nitze.

Nitze. In regards to the ABM Treaty, we proceed from the understanding that it will most likely be necessary to reach a separate agreement on the issues of strategic defense and space. In this case, the question was treated as a separate "package."

Akhromeyev. You know our basic position on this question. It states that future agreements would depend on each side's compliance with the ABM Treaty as it was signed in 1972 for at least 10 years. This has to be stated in the Agreement on reducing strategic weapons. You heard the General Secretary say today that if either side begins to deploy its ABM, the agreement to reduce SNF could be denounced. The General Secretary also noted that in this situation, the denouncing side would have the right to deploy anti-satellite systems.

Nitze. I believe our side knows your position well, and we are not trying to change it. It seems logical to assume that if we cannot reach an agreement on reduction of strategic weapons, then we just will have nothing with which to coordinate compliance with the ABM Treaty. Therefore, let us discuss the possibility of the sides coming to an agreement on reduction of offensive weapons, as well as work on other unresolved issues. We understand that the final Agreement will depend on the Soviet side's satisfaction with the state of affairs in observing the ABM Treaty. We propose having a concrete discussion about the numbers, methods of tallying, etc., in order to prevent ourselves from being dragged into the jungle of theoretical reasoning. Let us first look at whether we can agree on the main issue, because if we cannot do that, the rest of the discussion would be meaningless. If we can agree, then we could discuss that question as well.

Akhromeyev. This is a faulty presentation of the problem. The connection between the ABM Treaty and the reduction of strategic weapons is recognized by the American side as well as by our side. It is another matter that in the period of three days, we will not be able to reach a coordinated position that would satisfy both sides and could be entered into the text of a joint statement by the General Secretary and the President. Nevertheless, the connection we are discussing will have to be acknowledged in the statement you gave us, and in any case the General Secretary and the President have to assign this problem to be studied further.

Furthermore, we would like to hear what you have to say about sea-launched long-range cruise missiles.

Nitze. In relation to the second question, I would like to remind you that we discussed it in Reykjavik, where we were told that we do not see a possibility to verify the reduction in a satisfactory manner, and nothing has changed since then. That is why we did not include this question in the statement and we would like to hear your opinion on this matter.

Akhromeyev. I cannot overlook the fundamental difference in our positions. We cannot sign a document satisfying all the conditions of the American side, but failing to reflect issues important to the Soviet side. Therefore, I once again emphasize that these questions will have to be reflected in the document we are trying to work out.

As promised, we worked on the issue of sea-launched long-range cruise missile verification. I am ready to state our position on it, and afterwards we can move on to discussing the questions you raised.

We believe that observance of cruise missile reductions can first be verified through national technical means. In particular, we have radio means that allow us to determine the presence, location, and estimated force of nuclear weapons on-board ships. I think you have analogous technologies. Thus, if the national technical means discover nuclear weapons onboard a ship, and the suspicion arises that the Treaty is violated, the right to an on-site inspection would be granted. Your proposal describes an integral program to organize inspections to verify the reduction of ground-based ICBM and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. We are not against this program in general. Then the question arises why we can verify ballistic missiles on a submarine through on-site inspections, but we cannot verify a cruise missile on a submarine through national technical means and inspections.

And now, if there are no objections, I would like to move on to a point-by-point examination of the questions stated in your proposal.

Graham. I would like to comment on the question of using radioactivity sensors to detect nuclear weapons aboard a ship. In our point of view, there are a number of technical aspects that limit the practical expediency of this method: these include the possibility of camouflage by shielding the radiation with the body of the ship, or distortion through background radiation from a nuclear power facility.

Akhromeyev. I cannot completely agree with you, because background radiation from a nuclear power facility can be reliably identified; furthermore, camouflage should be prohibited by the Treaty in a similar manner as the measures stipulated in your proposal, for example, the ban on telemetry encryption, etc. With some goodwill, this question can be resolved.

Graham. I would like to note that background radiation is much stronger than radiation from weapons; besides, [your] analogy of telemetry encryption is unfitting because encryption cannot be hidden, while radiation can.

Akhromeyev. I can only repeat that we have means of differentiating between the radiation of a nuclear weapon and the radiation of a nuclear power facility. We are ready to inform you about these means at the appropriate time.

With this, I propose to finish discussion of this question. After the American side reviews our proposal, I would like to move on to discuss specific questions and then decide which proposal—the Soviet or the American—we should use as the foundation for further work.

Nitze. I propose designating a special sub-group to work on this question tomorrow.

Akhromeyev. These are negotiations on strategic weapons; therefore, it would be unjustified to separate sea-launched cruise missiles into a separate group like chemical weapons, for example.

Nitze. Since you disagree with my proposal, I think we should, as you said, continue our work.

Akhromeyev. I suggest that right now we examine the problems and tomorrow morning decide which draft we will work with. Considering the delegations' work schedules, we could meet on December 9th in the morning from 8.00 or 10.30, or in the evening from 21.00, and on December 10th from 10.30.

Moving on to the issues, first we need to discuss the question of sublevels. We recorded at the Geneva meeting that the difference between the American and Soviet positions consists of 300 warheads. You proposed a sublevel of 4800 units for the ICBM and SLBM, while we proposed a sublevel of 5200–5100 units. We frankly stated our reason for this sublevel: we have no intention of building more bombers than necessary for 900 cruise missiles. We have no need for more bombers. Furthermore, we are limited by our production capabilities. Therefore, we ask you to accept the 5100 unit sublevel for ICBM and SLBM warheads.

Nitze. Before we come to any specific number, we should agree on the terms of our calculations so it is clear how we obtain this or that number. First and foremost, this pertains to missiles with multiple warheads.

Akhromeyev. As I understand it, this brings us to a discussion of the “Back-fire” aircraft. You know our position—this is a medium bomber with a combat radius of 2200 km. You are also familiar with the Soviet leadership's statement from 1979, and there have been no changes since then. Consequently, this aircraft will not be considered in our review of strategic nuclear weapons. As for bombers in general, Soviet as well as American, they all carry 6 cruise missiles, if I understood you correctly.

Nitze. Exactly right, 6 cruise missiles.

Akhromeyev. But in fact your bombers carry many more missiles, why should we count them only as 6?

The question of bombers has two sides. First, it is related to the objective of simplifying the difficult problem of control; secondly, it is related to the realities of combat use of this aircraft. As we know, practical combat capabilities of a bomber are considerably lower than its expected capabilities. In order to simplify the problem of air-launched cruise missiles, we proceed from the premise that it is sufficient to recognize the type of aircraft in order to know the number of missiles on board.

We agree to the following approach—to choose an airfield on American or Soviet territory and to land old and new types of American and Soviet bombers with mounted model cruise missiles. Each side could then inspect the aircraft to decide combat capacity according to the number of missiles.

Nitze. Operational experience shows that bombers are usually equipped with fewer bombs than the calculated capacity.

Akhromeyev. We know that the B-52 and B-1 carry much more than 6 missiles and we are prepared to show you our aircraft.

Chervov. They carry 20 or more missiles. This was demonstrated at trials.

Akhromeyev. That is to say, we are proposing an on-site inspection.

Nitze. We cannot agree to that. We cannot accept calculations that count ghost-missiles, i.e. missiles we in any case do not plan to load on our bombers.

Graham. The types of bombers we are discussing on both sides are similar in size, construction, and combat capabilities, and it is very difficult to establish a number of missiles on a bomber at every given moment. The option you are suggesting would just make the negotiations more difficult.

Akhromeyev. I propose not to rush to conclusions and to carefully think about this question. Further, right now you are proposing to count missiles with a range of 1500 km and more, whereas earlier, the 600 km range missiles were considered strategic.

Graham. We discussed this issue in Geneva and concluded that a missile with a nuclear warhead is considered strategic if its range is 1500 km and more. This is explained partially by growing anti-aircraft defense, and partially by the fact that the 600 km range was initially a mistake—it is one of the reasons why SALT-II was not ratified.

Akhromeyev. We should note that the 600 km range was agreed upon at negotiations and recorded in the text of the Treaty signed by the American side.

My understanding concerning the guidelines for counting ICBMs is that you propose to count the number of warheads on ICBMs and SLBMs based on test results?

Nitze. We propose counting the number of warheads that we state officially, and you will have the option of verifying that we do not exceed this amount.

Akhromeyev. We will consider this question and state our opinion tomorrow. Nevertheless, it seems illogical to conduct tests of a missile with a greater number of warheads than is recorded in the Treaty. We believe that the number of warheads recorded in the Treaty for a given type of missile should be the number that it is tested with.

Nitze. Allow me to conclude our meeting here so as not to be late to the White House.

[Source: Georgy M. Kornienko Personal Archive. Translated by Anna Melyakova.]

Document No. 48: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, Third Meeting, Washington, 10:35 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

December 9, 1987

(With Information Memorandum by Ermarth from December 15, 1987)

In this 10-minute one-one-one meeting, the two presidents sign a baseball from Joe DiMaggio before exchanging ideas about the next summit they are planning for 1988. The cover memorandum from Fritz Ermarth to National Security Adviser Colin Powell summarizes the most important points of the meeting and of the understandings achieved so far about the next summit. Both sides essentially commit to another meeting, although Reagan is not ready to set a date. While the Soviets stress the desirability of signing START at the summit, they drop the strong linkage between the two. Among many reasons, they need the summit, as Ermarth points out, to set the stage for “a grand CPSU Conference in late June which will be critical to [Gorbachev’s] political plans.” Gorbachev accepts Reagan’s invitation to visit the United States, including California, on an unofficial trip and emphasizes that they need to meet more often “[i]f we wish to restructure our relations and improve our dialogue and cooperation.”

Attached is our interpreter’s memcon of the President’s private meeting with Gorbachev on the morning of December 9—the “Dimaggio Meeting.” The most important contents are a) the President virtually commits to a spring summit, a fairly short one; b) Gorbachev is definitely stressing late May or early June as the best dates, while the President is holding back on dates; and c) Gorbachev contemplates a “tourist-type” trip back to the US, perhaps while the President is still in office.

Two additional points: First, as of the moment, the Soviets are not stressing the completion of START as a condition for a 1988 summit; they’re playing this linkage softly. Second, Gorbachev has his own political reasons for a Moscow summit in the suggested timeframe, even were it only to record progress toward START; it would come just before a grand CPSU Conference in late June which will be critical to his political plans.

When you’ve read this memcon, it should be returned to Paul Stevens for filing with the other summit records.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

The President started the meeting by passing to the General Secretary a baseball from Joe DiMaggio (who had attended the State dinner the previous evening) for his (and the President’s) autograph. Gorbachev indicated that he had heard of the request, and was glad to comply.

The President then told the General Secretary that in the coming two days they would be working hard to set in motion the other things that needed to be accomplished in order that the people on both sides could work hard in the winter and spring to make a summit in Moscow possible next summer. He indicated that he would be prepared to keep his people working at this, in addition to what the two of them would discuss this morning and tomorrow.

The General Secretary replied that he welcomed this, and that it was not only his feeling, but also that of the Soviet leadership, to continue to work at these issues, and to make the process even more dynamic, not only in the main area of arms control, but in other areas as well, in order to prepare a good visit by Reagan to Moscow which would also be productive and important.

Gorbachev continued that a good time for the visit, when it was not too hot, would be the early summer, perhaps early June or late May. This would allow time for the process of ratification and also would allow for time for a lot of work to be done on a new document on strategic arms and other issues.

The President agreed.

Gorbachev continued that in his conversation with Mrs. Reagan the other night, he had indicated that a program could be arranged which would include time for meetings between the President and himself, meetings of working groups, but also one or two days during which the President and Mrs. Reagan could see the country.

The President replied that that would be nice. He could not agree to a date, however, until he knew when some other things would be taking place, e.g., the Economic Summit, which usually occurs in early summer. So he would need some time before agreeing to a date. But he did want to go to Moscow.

The President said that this visit had been a rather short one, but perhaps some time before the President left office, the General Secretary and Raisa could return, not for a Summit, but simply to see the country, and California specifically, since one has not seen America without seeing California.

Gorbachev agreed that this was a good idea, and that there should be regular meetings between the leaders of the two countries, and not always official visits. If we wish to restructure our relations and improve our dialogue and cooperation, all these things could be done in a more normal way, including visits to the U.S. to get to know the country. Such a trip would be important to get a deeper knowledge of the U.S., and would be a possibility.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 49: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, Fourth Meeting, Washington, 10:55 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

December 9, 1987

In this expanded bilateral, with Shultz and Carlucci joining on the U.S. side and Shevardnadze on the Soviet side, most of the discussion is devoted to SDI. Using his favorite metaphor of gas masks, which people held onto even after chemical weapons were banned, Reagan tries to persuade the Soviets to embrace his SDI proposal, which in his view would provide a “better, more stable basis for peace.” Reagan proposes a “separate, new treaty of unlimited duration,” which would allow both sides to develop and test SDI elements with an agreed period of non-deployment. A “combination of effective defenses and a 50 percent reduction in strategic arsenals,” he argues, would provide a new concept of “strategic stability.” Although Gorbachev expresses his strong opposition to SDI, his views now show more flexibility than a year ago at Reykjavik, and he is much more accepting of the idea that testing would go on. Both sides agree on the need to conclude a treaty calling for a 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons, preferably by the summit in Moscow in late May or June. At the end of the session, Reagan and Gorbachev discuss Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war. Gorbachev agrees to start the withdrawal from Afghanistan on condition that the U.S. terminates its arms sales and support for the rebels. He speaks in favor of national reconciliation in regional conflicts where both superpowers can pressure their allies to negotiate. At the end of the conversation, Gorbachev hands Reagan a folder with a personal letter from North Korean leader Kim Il Sung regarding the establishment of a “buffer zone” between the two Koreas. Gorbachev asks that it be closely held as not even all members of the North Korean leadership have been informed of the initiative.

The meeting was preceded by a ten minute one-on-one with only interpreters present.

The President opened by noting that the day before had been a proud one. But as the General Secretary himself had said the two leaders had to keep working.

The President said he wanted to return to some of the subjects the two had talked about in their first meeting, especially the relationship between strategic offense and defense. The two sides’ experts had met the day before on START and had had a good discussion. The U.S. had stressed two important issues: verification and counting rules. On verification, our ideas built on what we had learned from the INF negotiation. Counting rules were also important. Issues like sublimits could not be decided until we knew exactly how different types of weapons were to be counted. However, the President was encouraged by Soviet willingness to compromise between 4800 and 5100 ballistic missile warheads. Were it possible to come to agreement on this, the President would be prepared to be forthcoming on an ICBM sublimit. (Gorbachev made a note at this point.)

The President noted that the Soviet side had also discussed sea-launched cruise missiles and had suggested new ideas for their verification. The General Secretary had also expressed a readiness to examine verification of mobile missiles. The U.S. appreciated Gorbachev's suggestions; and, while we had some doubts, we were willing to study his concepts.

Moving to a discussion of the U.S. defense and space position, the President noted that the arms control working group was taking up these issues that day. Each side seemed to understand the other's position on START, but this wasn't true in Defense and Space. The President wanted to urge that the two sides move *together* in a direction in which they were already going separately.

Specifically, he indicated that, if it were possible to agree on a treaty reducing strategic arsenals by 50 percent and preserve the opportunity for effective strategic defenses, the two sides would stand on the threshold of a new and stronger regime of strategic stability. Offensive nuclear weapons had helped to keep the peace for over forty years. But now it was necessary to look to the future. The President and Gorbachev held awesome responsibilities. Their only means to avoid nuclear war was to be prepared to strike each other's homeland with devastating consequences, not only for their countries, but for the world. Their successors, and, more importantly, their peoples, deserved better. For his part, the President wanted to strengthen peace by finding new ways to save lives rather than threaten to avenge them. Providing a better, more stable basis for peace was the central purpose of SDI.

The President pointed out that effective defenses against ballistic missiles could strengthen stability in a number of ways. First, they would significantly increase uncertainty about whether missiles could penetrate defenses to destroy the other side's capability to retaliate. This would become even more important after a 50 percent reduction in strategic offensive arms.

Second, defenses would provide an alternative to accepting massive devastation if a missile were ever launched in error or against either side by another country.

Third, defenses could reinforce arms reductions. Fifty percent reductions, combined with increasingly effective defenses, could offer a real hope of protecting people, not just weapons.

Finally, defenses would underwrite the integrity of arms reductions by reducing the advantages of cheating.

In short, the President noted, the combination of effective defenses and a 50 percent reduction in strategic arsenals would establish a whole new concept of strategic stability. It would be the measure people in the U.S. held most important—by removing any incentive to strike first in a crisis. But it would also improve stability by the measure the Soviet military held most important—by ensuring that neither side could be surprised by the military advances of the other. Thus we could improve strategic stability by both U.S. and Soviet standards.

The President observed that he had noticed Gorbachev's March 1, 1987 remarks in *Pravda*, which focused on the issue of deployment. The President

considered that the right approach. He was therefore prepared to negotiate with Gorbachev a period during which neither side would deploy strategic defenses beyond those permitted by the ABM Treaty. The length of the period could be agreed once the terms were settled. At Reykjavik, Gorbachev had talked of ten years. The President believed it would be possible to agree on the length of the period once the terms were settled.

Moreover, in order to reassure Gorbachev that the Soviet Union would not be surprised by events during the non-deployment period, the President was also prepared to commit to a package designed to increase predictability for both sides. He would ask Carlucci to describe that package in a moment. In brief, however, the President was offering Gorbachev predictability during a non-deployment period of certain length. In return, the President needed to protect the existing U.S.—and Soviet—right to conduct, in the words of Marshal Grechko, “research and experimental work aimed at resolving the problem of defending the country against nuclear missile attack.” Both sides needed a clear right to deploy defenses after that period.

The U.S., then, was seeking a separate, new treaty of unlimited duration that could go into effect at the same time the START treaty went into effect. This second treaty would contain a period during which both sides would commit not to deploy defensive systems currently prohibited by the ABM Treaty. After that period of time, both sides would be free to deploy such defenses without further reference to the ABM Treaty, after giving six months’ notice of intent to deploy. During the non-deployment period, both sides would have the right to pursue their strategic defense programs, conducting research, development and testing, including testing in space, as required. Their negotiators in Geneva could explain in detail the U.S. concept of deployment.

As Gorbachev would see, the President was trying to create a future in which the two sides would have reduced strategic offensive arms by 50% and could pursue their respective strategic defense programs as common elements in a new regime which Gorbachev had called “strategic stability.” In that context, the President had taken special note of the General Secretary’s interview with Tom Brokaw the week before, in which Gorbachev had acknowledged the existence of a Soviet analogue to SDI. This was a step in the right direction.

This then, was a summary of the U.S. position, the President concluded. He would ask Secretary Shultz to comment in further detail.

Secretary Shultz handed out a Russian text of what he described as elements on which negotiators in Geneva might build.

First, he noted, there would be a period of time during which both sides would commit not to deploy defensive systems currently prohibited by the ABM Treaty. The secretary noted in this connection the President’s remark that it would be possible to agree on an appropriate time period.

Second, after that period, both sides would be free to deploy defenses not currently permitted by the Treaty after giving six months’ notice of an intent to deploy and without any further reference to the ABM Treaty.

Third, during the non-deployment period, both sides would have the right to pursue their strategic defense programs, conducting research, development and testing, including testing in space, as required.

Fourth, to enhance strategic stability, promote predictability and ensure confidence that prohibited deployments were not being undertaken during the non-deployment period, the U.S. proposed that the two sides meet regularly to do three things:

- Exchange programmatic data and briefings on each side's strategic defense programs;
- Arrange for agreed mutual observation of strategic defense tests and visits to strategic defense research facilities;
- Arrange for intensive discussions of strategic stability to begin not later than three years before the end of the non-deployment period.

The Secretary added that all of this should be seen in light of the fact that the period in question would span several Presidential terms. The relevant research would be going on. No one could tell what the situation would be at the end of the period. The two sides would, however, have an opportunity to discuss matters in the context of what was taking place at the time.

The Secretary suggested that Carlucci briefly describe the type of confidence building measures (CBM's) the U.S. had in mind under its proposal.

Secretary Carlucci explained that such CBM's would be designed to give each side the predictability it needed. The U.S. had earlier put proposals for "open labs" on the table in Geneva, but had received no response. There were other things which could be done. There were things which would make it possible to observe research in space. The U.S. would be prepared to open up such facilities as Livermore Labs and Stanford Research; the Soviet side might be prepared to open up its own facilities, such as those which produced chemical lasers.

With respect to joint observation of actions in space, the U.S. was aware of the Soviet near-space vehicle. We had our shuttle. If, for example, the U.S. sought to conduct a sensor experiment in space, the Soviet near-space vehicle could be maneuvered close enough to satisfy Moscow that no offensive weapon was being tested. Such activities could be undertaken without compromising the security or integrity of the programs involved on either side. Carlucci noted that Marshal Akhromeyev was scheduled to visit him at the Pentagon that afternoon. Carlucci had invited Gen. Abrahamson to brief him in detail on U.S. space defense CBM ideas.

The President, noting that Gorbachev had probably heard enough from U.S. representatives, invited the General Secretary to share any reactions.

Gorbachev said that he did, in fact, have a few words in response. First, he could not on the level of principle support the proposal the President had just outlined. The thrust of that proposal was to invite the Soviet Union to join the U.S. in undertaking a kind of SDI program. Gorbachev had said before Moscow had no intention of developing its own SDI; he had even urged the President to renounce

the program. If the U.S. proceeded, the Soviet side had made clear it would develop a response. But that response would take a different path from SDI.

What then, were the proposals of the Soviet side? The ABM regime had worked well for fifteen years. True, some concerns had been expressed with respect to compliance with the Treaty, including in the recent past. But a mechanism for dealing with such problems existed in the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC), which had worked well in the past. Such concerns could be discussed and removed. But in fact both sides had basically observed the Treaty in the past.

But now we were entering a new phase, a phase of reducing strategic offensive arms. Not only would it be necessary to continue to observe the ABM Treaty, it should be strengthened—as had been agreed at Reykjavik—through a commitment not to withdraw from the Treaty as strategic offensive arms were reduced. On the basis of such an approach, which presumed an interpretation of the Treaty consistent with that which had been used since Day One of its existence, it would be possible to begin work on the specifics of reducing strategic arms by 50%.

The President, Gorbachev noted, had himself said that SDI was not up for negotiation. If he were now proposing to structure the two leaders' discussion of strategic offensive arms reductions by linking that subject to SDI, Gorbachev had to say it would be a slow process. It would take time first of all just to define SDI. Space was a new area for both countries; there were no criteria for making judgments. Both sides would be groping in the dark. Such an approach would lead the dialogue down a blind alley.

Gorbachev underscored that he objected in principle to SDI. If America wished to pursue the program, that was its business—to the extent its activities were consistent with the ABM Treaty.

But if there was a real desire for accommodation on both sides, the Soviet approach was a practical one. Taking into account the U.S. desire to implement SDI, Moscow simply proposed that neither side use its right to withdraw from the Treaty for ten years. Two to three years before the end of that period, there could be a discussion of what to do next. If the U.S. had decided to deploy SDI, it could say so. But during the ten years of the period the Soviet side would have the assurance that, while strategic offensive arms were being reduced, the U.S. would observe the ABM Treaty and not use its right to withdraw. This was something the two sides could agree on.

As for SDI research, it could continue, and the U.S. could decide what to do after ten years. If the U.S. were to violate the ABM Treaty during that period, the Soviet side would be released from any obligation to continue reductions, and would have the right to build and perfect weapons, as well as to cancel its anti-satellite (ASAT) moratorium. But that would occur only if the U.S. decided to deploy SDI.

The Soviet Union, for its part, did not want a new sphere for the arms race. It did not want to deploy SDI. Moscow did not know what, precisely, it wanted to do in the areas involved.

Therefore it proposed a straightforward approach: 50% reductions in strategic offensive arms; agreement on a period of non-withdrawal; observance of the Treaty as it had been observed in the past. As for SDI, the U.S. could do research. Should it ultimately decide to deploy, that would be up to the U.S., but after the termination of the withdrawal period. This proposal would make it possible to implement 50% reductions in strategic weapons in the context of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and to continue research. Before the end of the ten year period, there could be a discussion.

For the Soviet side, it would be less expensive to explore ways other than through SDI-type deployments to ensure its security. Thus, SDI was not acceptable from a political standpoint; it was not acceptable from a military standpoint (as it was destabilizing); it was not acceptable from an economic standpoint. It could wear out the Soviet economy. It was up to the U.S. to decide if SDI made sense for itself in economic terms; the Soviet Union had decided it did not. Should the U.S. decide to deploy SDI at the end of a non-withdrawal period, Gorbachev warned, the Soviet side would have to respond. But that response would be less costly than SDI.

Gorbachev suggested in conclusion that the two sides seek a solution which enabled the U.S. to develop SDI, but would do so in a way which did not make SDI an obstacle to progress in the reduction of strategic arms. Gorbachev had outlined the Soviet proposal for guaranteeing peace. For the U.S., the answer was SDI. For the Soviet Union, the answer was different: nuclear disarmament; maintenance of the ABM regime; and no extension of the arms race to space.

The President volunteered an answer of his own. It was possible to proceed immediately with 50% reductions. Any other options were years ahead for both sides. It would be better not to link the two concepts. The discussions thus far had revealed some common ground. Let the working groups go to work. But one issue should not be made hostage to the other.

As for SDI, the President offered a counterargument to Gorbachev's suggestion that the program would step up the arms race. The President saw it as essential to the realization of the dream of a non-nuclear world. The secret of nuclear weapons was spreading inexorably. If the U.S. and Soviet Union ever reached the point where they had eliminated all their nuclear arms, they would have to face the possibility that a madman in one country or another could develop a nuclear capability for purposes of conquest or blackmail. The situation was not unlike that after agreement had been reached to ban the use of poison gas. People had kept their gasmasks. There would always be a need for a defense. The U.S. and Soviet Union could eliminate their nuclear arsenals without fear of nuclear attack by other countries if they had a reliable defensive shield.

In this context, the President had been encouraged by Gorbachev's acknowledgment of a Soviet program akin to SDI. He was grateful for Gorbachev's words because a future based on an ability to counter any attack would be based on real stability, not the stability that came from the ability to destroy.

Gorbachev observed that the American press had distorted the thrust of his remarks to Brokaw. He had not said that the Soviet Union had its own SDI. He had

said that the Soviet Union was engaged in many areas of basic research, including some covered on the U.S. side by SDI. He had not gone beyond this. He had added, moreover, that the Soviet Union would not deploy SDI, and had urged the U.S. not to do so. The Soviet Union would find a different path. The U.S. would not draw the Soviet Union into an SDI program.

On the other hand, if the U.S. wanted to reduce strategic arms, it would have to accept a ten-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. At the end of that period, the U.S. could decide what it would do. The Soviet side could accept that, although it was definitely against SDI.

As for prospects for a START agreement, Gorbachev expressed his readiness to cooperate and respond to the major U.S. concerns. Moscow was ready to reduce heavy ICBM's by 50%. As for sea launched cruise missiles (SLCM's), he had yesterday shared his ideas on verification with the President. He was also ready to look again at the sublimits question. So, he was ready to work to achieve a treaty. But if the President wanted to link that process to SDI, if it had to involve SDI, there would be no START treaty either with the President or his successors.

Secretary Shultz asked if he might describe a possible work program, in view of the previous discussion. Both sides, he noted, seemed to be committed to achieving a START agreement. Work was already underway among experts.

The Secretary clarified that the President did not mean to suggest that a START treaty be linked to Soviet acceptance of SDI. In fact, he had said there should be no linkage to anything.

Gorbachev interjected that a START treaty had to be linked to the ABM Treaty.

The Secretary continued that the question was not one of whether the Soviet Union liked or did not like SDI. Neither side could tell the other how to see to its own defense. But the proposal Gorbachev outlined seemed on the surface not to be inconsistent with what the U.S. wanted.

For its part, the U.S. side believed that the proposal the President had made was consistent with the ABM Treaty. Mr. Gorbachev might not agree with that assessment. But the point was that it made no sense to set out down a certain path when both sides knew they did not agree on what, superficially, they seemed to agree on. The President had proposed a means of ensuring that their [sic] we were sure what we meant.

The Secretary recalled that the Soviet side had asked for predictability. The President's proposal would guarantee that there would be no deployments against the Soviet Union for a certain period. The President had said it should be possible to agree on the number of years such a period would last. He had also said that, when the period ended, either side could do what it chose.

The question remained, what would happen in the meantime? We had tried to get at that question through the means that Carlucci had described. These would give the Soviet side confidence in what the U.S. was doing. We would hope Moscow would reciprocate by permitting similar access.

The President's proposal had also incorporated the Soviet idea that, before the end of the agreed period, there would be agreement in advance to discussions of the situation created as a result of strategic reductions and the results of research to that point. This discussion would take place several years in advance of the end of the period. While each side would have the right to do what it wished at the end of the period, this discussion would allow both to take into account facts which had emerged in the interim. This could have an impact on the ultimate results.

So, the Secretary continued, the President's proposal was not an effort to link Soviet acceptance of SDI to a START treaty—even though we could not understand why Moscow was opposed to SDI. Rather, it was an attempt to give the Soviet side greater confidence that it understood what was going on the U.S. side. But to agree on radical reductions of strategic arms, based on an understanding of the status of the ABM Treaty both sides knew in their bones was not shared, made the U.S. side uncomfortable and was probably unwise. That was why we hoped that Akhromeyev would listen to what Abrahamson had to say. Who knew? Perhaps the two of them would come up with something new.

Gorbachev asked why the U.S. could not accept the Soviet formula: 50% reductions in strategic arms; a ten-year non-withdrawal period; discussion two to three years before the end of that period on what to do next. This was a simple approach. There was no reason to encumber the discussion of 50% reductions.

Shevardnadze interjected that it was important to consider another factor—if the President were to pay a return visit to Moscow, there had to be a decision on what such a visit might produce. *Shevardnadze* had been operating on the assumption that the purpose of the visit would be to sign an agreement on 50% reductions in strategic arms in the context of the preservation of the ABM Treaty for an agreed period, as he and the Secretary had publicly stated. This had been the basis for all their discussions. If the two sides started to open up philosophical questions about what might happen years from now, the President's visit could not be crowned by signature of an agreement.

That was why it was critical, *Shevardnadze* said, to define the parameters of observance of the ABM Treaty in the context of 50% reductions. If the question were consigned to experts, there would never be a decision. A key issue was to decide on the duration of the non-withdrawal period. Another was limits on SLCMs. The size of those limits and their verification could be discussed, but a decision was needed.

Finally, *Shevardnadze* continued, there could be no question of the INF Treaty becoming the end of the process. It could not stop. Nuclear proliferation was a growing problem, which made it all the more important to maintain the momentum of nuclear arms reductions. The President's visit could provide a major stimulus to this effort. As for SDI, it was not and had not been a subject for discussion. Secretary Shultz had made clear it was the President's program. But there was a need to clarify certain questions or there would be no START agreement.

Dobrynin reiterated *Gorbachev's* point that the ABM Treaty had worked well for fifteen years. Now the U.S. seemed to be proposing that, at the Washington

summit, the two leaders in effect announce that this treaty of unlimited duration would cease to be. That was the effect of the President's proposal: there would be three years of negotiations, and then there would be an open arms race.

The President pointed out that the Soviet side was forgetting something. Prior to Gorbachev's assuming office, there had been violations by the Soviet side of the ABM Treaty. The Krasnoyarsk radar was the principal example. But there were other differences of interpretation. We believed that the Treaty allowed research into weapons which it did not specifically address. The Treaty had dealt with ABM interceptor missiles; it did not ban research into and development of other systems not even envisioned at the time. SDI clearly was covered by the clause which covered other physical principles. It was not an interceptor missile. But there were real questions of when the Soviet side would begin to abide by the ABM Treaty.

Secretary Shultz proposed that he seek to outline areas where broad agreement seemed to exist.

First, the two sides agreed on the concept of a period of time—as yet undecided—when there would be no deployment of antiballistic missile systems beyond what was permitted by the ABM Treaty. There was agreement that, at the end of the period, either side could do what it chose to do. The U.S. had sought to pick up on the Soviet proposal that there should be agreement in advance that the two sides would discuss problems of strategic stability well before the period ended.

Where there was no agreement was on the question of what actions could be undertaken during the period in question. The U.S. would have no problem agreeing to the formula, “the ABM Treaty, as signed and ratified,” because it considered its SDI program to be consistent with that concept. The Secretary said that he had heard that Gorbachev was tired of hearing Grechko quoted back to him, but stressed that that was part of the record. The point he was making was that the two sides differed on such questions of interpretation.

Gorbachev interjected that these differences had emerged only in 1983. Prior to that, there were no differences, as Congressional hearings and Pentagon reports made clear. Only after SDI had been proposed did the U.S. seek to make the Treaty fit the program. A lawyer had been found to make the case. But, as Bismarck had said, a lawyer could be found to justify anything. What was going on was obvious to everyone. The U.S. should have more respect for the Soviet side than to expect that they would not see through this.

If the U.S. wanted 50% reductions, Gorbachev reemphasized, there had to be a commitment of 10 years on the ABM Treaty. There would be nothing on SDI before that in any case. The issue was not that complex. But the U.S. side was trying to make things “foggy.”

The President replied with some feeling that it was not he who was making things foggy. He wanted to make things clear. He did not want to talk about links to SDI, but about 50% reductions, about how the Hell the two sides were to eliminate half their nuclear weapons. He wanted to talk about how the two leaders could sign an agreement like the one they had signed the day before—an

agreement which had made everyone in the world so damned happy it could be felt in the room at dinner the night before. "Let's get started with it," he concluded.

Gorbachev said he was ready. The two leaders should make clear that they were working on agreed reductions and were making progress. They should also indicate that, as they began this important process, they reaffirmed their commitment not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for ten years. This should not be a problem. The period could be for nine years if that would help.

The Secretary suggested that the issue be set aside for a moment. He felt there had been some progress. There was agreement on the concept of a certain period. There was agreement on what should happen at the end of that period. The two sides were not there yet on actions [that] were to be permitted during that period, but that could be worked [out]. But there was clear agreement on the need for major cuts in strategic arms. Indeed, the Secretary had felt electricity on this point. That was the place to start.

Gorbachev said he would like to return for a moment to the issue of SLCM's. If this question were not resolved, he warned, there could be no agreement. The Soviet side had outlined clearly its position. What was the U.S. stand on this issue?

The President said he thought this was a matter for experts. *Gorbachev* said that they would be unable to do anything without guidance from the top.

Secretary Shultz reminded *Gorbachev* that the U.S. had problems with the verification of SLCMs. The General Secretary had said the day before that the Soviet side had some ideas for dealing with verification. We were ready to study them. If we could be satisfied that they were workable—and that was a big question—this would be a realistic basis for proceeding. At this point, the Secretary concluded, he was not in a position to respond to *Gorbachev's* proposal for a SLCM ceiling of 400 missiles.

Gorbachev noted ironically that the U.S. had no answer on this and other issues he had raised, only more demands of the Soviet side. But this was not the kind of momentum that was needed. The U.S. was simply squeezing more and more concessions out of its partner. Verification of SLCMs should be more of a problem for Moscow than Washington, *Gorbachev* pointed out, in view of the U.S. advantage in numbers of SLCM's. Once there was agreement on a number, the verification problem could be resolved. If it proved impossible to satisfy the U.S. on verification, the Soviets would remove their insistence on a numerical limit.

Secretary Shultz repeated that the U.S. would study the Soviet SLCM proposals.

Gorbachev replied, "good," adding that the conversation had been a good one. It had made it clearer what both sides wanted. *Gorbachev* emphasized in closing this phase of the discussion the importance he attached to reductions of strategic arms—a key issue in the relationship, and one which required a responsible approach from both sides. Obviously, no agreements were possible except on the basis of equality.

The President said jocularly that he, for one, had no desire to come to Moscow to be disappointed.

Gorbachev said he had not meant to suggest any linkage. If the President wished to come to Moscow without a START agreement, he would be welcome. But he should say so. For his part, *Gorbachev* felt that there was, in fact, a common understanding that the visit should be marked by the signing of an important document. The Soviet side wanted to push toward that goal. If the President was operating from a different set of assumptions, all he had to do was say so. The Geneva negotiators would probably be just as glad to spend their time playing soccer. But *Gorbachev* assumed that the Administration shared his assessment that an agreement was possible. The President's visit would be an important one; but if he wished to finesse the question of a treaty, he should say so.

Secretary Shultz observed that *Gorbachev* had heard with his own ears what the President had said on that count. For himself, he could assure *Gorbachev* that, whenever he (the Secretary) went off to meet with Shevardnadze, the President made clear in no uncertain terms what he wanted the Secretary to accomplish. The Secretary thought the President had made his views on a START agreement pretty clear to the General Secretary as well a moment before.

Gorbachev acknowledged that this was important. But one had to decide beforehand in building a bridge whether it should go across a divide or alongside it. The Soviet approach was that there should be a good treaty by the time the President came to Moscow. If there was another view in Washington, it would be best to make that clear. In Russian, *Gorbachev* recounted, there was a saying: "If you respect me, don't make a fool of me. Tell me what you want."

The Secretary quipped that he hoped this didn't mean *Gorbachev* was giving up. *Gorbachev* replied that, on the contrary, that was why he had urged against any link between START and SDI. There should be a good treaty by the time of the President's visit.

The President said he thought that was what he, himself, had said earlier. He had said that the two sides should be seeking to eliminate strategic weapons. So one objective, whether or not the U.S. deployed SDI, would be 50% fewer missiles. But this should only make the two sides more interested in defense, since they would both become more vulnerable to other nuclear states.

Gorbachev replied that it would be a long time before that was a problem, since even after a 50% reduction, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. arsenals would still vastly outweigh those of other states.

Responding to a suggestion by *Secretary Shultz*, *The President* suggested a brief discussion of regional issues. These issues, he noted, would greatly influence the long-term character of the two sides' relations and their immediate future as well.

Afghanistan was at the top of the U.S. list. There were more Soviet troops in that country than when the President had entered office. The U.S. and Soviet Union had had extensive discussions about Afghanistan. We understood each other's point of view. The President welcomed *Gorbachev's* declarations of intent

to withdraw. But it was long since time to act on these declarations. This would signal the beginning of a new era in East-West relations and in international affairs generally.

The nature of the conflict meant that a settlement depended mainly on the Soviet Union, the President continued. The U.S. would do its part to help if the Soviet Union actually withdrew. The U.S. and other governments could help assure that Afghanistan did not become a threat to Soviet security. The U.S. was prepared to do its part to ensure the emergence of a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan. It was time, now, here, at the summit, to set dates certain for the starting and ending of the withdrawal of Soviet forces, so that all troops were out by the end of 1988.

The President said he also wanted to address the Iran-Iraq war. The two sides needed to return to the pattern of cooperation which was reflected in their joint support for UNSC Resolution 598. The President was worried that subsequent Soviet policies were a departure from that cooperation, that they encouraged Iranian intransigence and belligerence. The day before, the Iraqi foreign minister had said that Iraq accepted Resolution 598 in all its parts. Iran was still undercutting the process. Now was the time for the President and Gorbachev to lend their weight to the process for the sake of the potential impact on the Iran-Iraq war, and for the sake of the dignity and future status of the Security Council itself. The U.S. and Soviet Union should be moving forward together on a second resolution. But since Iraq was going along with the UN, a boycott of Iran could help end the war.

Finally, the President mentioned Berlin, which he felt could be the site of positive developments. The President said he felt Gorbachev could and should tear down the Wall that day. But, in any case, the U.S. and Soviet Union should take smaller, practical steps to ameliorate the division of the city and to symbolize their mutual desire to overcome the division of Europe in a humane and stabilizing way. The U.S. had been working with the British and French on such proposals, and would soon present them to the Soviet Union. The President hoped for a positive response. He also urged that there be an end to shooting incidents involving the two sides military liaison mission activities—acknowledging that such actions did not take place on Gorbachev's orders.

Gorbachev noted that his list of priority regional questions coincided perfectly with that of the President. In general terms, he continued, Moscow was convinced that—whether in Central America, Kampuchea, Afghanistan or the Middle East—there was increasing support for regional political settlements. This new phase showed up in expanded contacts between opposing groups, in an upturn in political reconciliation, in a search for coalitions. A situation was developing, in short, where U.S.-Soviet cooperation could produce results. Indeed, if the two leaders could express their willingness to work together to resolve some of the issues involved, it could have a major impact.

On Afghanistan, Gorbachev noted, the Cordovez process had produced agreement on instruments regarding non-interference, on guarantees by the U.S.,

U.S.S.R., Pakistan and—desirably, at least—Iran. There was also agreement on the return of refugees; although this was primarily a matter for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. could make a contribution. The withdrawal of troops was the only remaining issue.

On that point, Najib had made a proposal—on which Moscow had been consulted—that Soviet forces be withdrawn within twelve months, with a provision that this timetable could be reduced. But the start was linked to the process of national reconciliation, specifically with the establishment of a coalition government.

It was up to the Afghans to decide the composition of that government. As for Moscow, it shared the view that Afghanistan should be independent and non-aligned. The Soviets recognized that Afghanistan could not be considered a “socialist” country. There were too many non-socialist characteristics: a multi-party system, tribalism, capitalists and clerical elements. The Soviets were realists. They did not want to try to make Afghanistan socialist.

They could not, of course, be indifferent to the situation there. There was a 2,000 mile common border. But he could assure the President that the Soviet Union wanted no bases in Afghanistan, nor any presence which would affect the strategic situation in the region. Instead, it wanted to complete the process of withdrawal on the basis of negotiation and national reconciliation.

The Afghan government, Gorbachev said, was taking a realistic approach. It had expressed its willingness to share up to 50% of government portfolios, including that of prime minister, with the opposition. The U.S. and Soviet Union could not make the necessary trade-offs. But if the Soviet side used its influence in Kabul, and the U.S. worked through those with whom it was in contact—and, Gorbachev noted matter of factly, he knew the President had received opposition leaders—it might help the two groups become reconciled to one another.

As for the withdrawal of Soviet forces, Gorbachev said that two events should coincide: the onset of withdrawals; and the end to “your” transfer of arms and financing of the opposition. From Day One of the withdrawal, Gorbachev volunteered, Soviet forces would engage in no operations except in self-defense. If the President could agree on that, the U.S. and Soviet sides could cooperate to resolve the problem. Moscow had no intention of seeking to leave behind a regime acceptable to itself alone. It would have no problem with a non-aligned and independent government. So perhaps he and the President should reach a “gentleman’s agreement” that the Soviets would talk [sic] to Najib, and the U.S. to the opposition.

The President said that the problem with the scenario Gorbachev had described was that one side would be left with the army, while the other would have to give [sic] up its arms. The resistance could not be asked to do this. All the Afghan people should have the right to settle matters peaceably. One side should not have a monopoly of force.

Gorbachev reiterated that an early solution to the Afghan problem was now possible. He suggested that the issue be discussed further by experts. *The President* agreed.

On the Iran-Iraq war, *Gorbachev* said he saluted U.S.-Soviet cooperation in the adoption of UNSC Resolution 598. Such cooperation was to be valued all the more because it was so rare. The question now was how to move things in the region in the direction of a settlement. The President knew what kind of people “those guys” in Iran were. It was not a simple matter.

The Soviet Union, for its part, had no desire to create problems for the U.S. in the region. Moscow sought instead a means which would enable the U.S. to move away from its current exposed position without harm to its interests. The Soviets had no interest in seeing things get out of control, or in seeing U.S. economic and other interests in the region suffer. The fact that there was a convergence of U.S. and Soviet interests on this point should help them to find mutually acceptable approaches.

What the Soviets feared, on the other hand, was a situation in which the Iranians felt themselves to be cornered and resorted to extreme measures. The Iranian leadership’s ability to inspire their population to remarkable efforts had been proven. The Islamic fundamentalism to which they appealed transcended the Gulf conflict.

The Soviets therefore felt that every effort should be made to exhaust the potential of UNSC 598. If Moscow became convinced that nothing else would work, it would accept a second resolution. But Iran’s capacity for rash actions if pushed into a corner had to be kept in mind.

Gorbachev therefore suggested that a “real” force be established on behalf of the UN to implement 598. This would allow the U.S. to reduce its presence without prejudice to its image or interests. The resolutions [sic] provision for resort to “impartial bodies” might also have some potential. In conjunction with use of the UN military staff committee it might prove an effective means of dealing with the situation.

In any case, Gorbachev reiterated, Moscow had no desire to undermine American prestige or interests in the region. Rather, it wanted to work with the U.S. to determine if there [sic] means which had not been exhausted to ensure full implementation of 598. If all else failed, he repeated, the Soviet Union would support a second resolution. But Gorbachev felt that the first still had untapped potential.

In a final comment on the Gulf, Gorbachev pointed out Iran’s proximity to Iran [sic], noting that, were Moscow to press too hard on the war with Iraq, it could complicate the Soviet position in Afghanistan.

Secretary Shultz said he hoped it would be possible to discuss this issue further later in the afternoon, or at some other point during the General Secretary’s visit. *Gorbachev* agreed.

Responding to *The President’s* reminder that the two leaders needed to join their wives, *Gorbachev* indicated he had one additional point to raise. Handing the President a folder, he recounted that North Korean leader Kim II Sung had asked that he convey to the President a personal message on the establishment of a “buffer zone” on the Korean peninsula. Gorbachev said he would not read the four-point proposal, which, he emphasized, Kim had asked be closely held.

The initiative had not been shared with all members even of the North Korean leadership.

The President accepted the folder.

Secretary Shultz used the opportunity to urge that Gorbachev consider a positive reference in any joint statement to the Olympic movement.

Gorbachev replied that Moscow wanted the Olympic games to take place, but urged that some events be held in the North. The International Olympic Committee was working on the issue. It should not become a political question.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Library*, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 50: Record of Conversation between Akhromeyev and Carlucci

December 9, 1987

The new secretary of defense, succeeding Caspar Weinberger who had resigned in November, hosts the Soviet marshal at the Pentagon for a discussion of possible cooperation on SDI research. Carlucci, who had stepped in as national security adviser after Poindexter's departure a year earlier, makes a very strong argument in defense of the program, saying that it is widely supported in the United States and that there is no chance for a strategic offensive weapons treaty to be ratified by Congress "regardless of how great it [is], if only it was said that it undermines the concept of SDI." Akhromeyev counters by questioning the feasibility of SDI and suggesting that the Soviet Union is capable of producing an asymmetrical response.

Carlucci. Mr. Marshal, I welcome you to the Pentagon. Allow me to open our dialogue. This morning at a meeting between the President and the General Secretary I touched upon the question of trust and was somewhat surprised by the reaction to my words. It seems that my words were interpreted as an attempt to pull the USSR into SDI, which is completely contrary to our intentions. If I understand your position correctly, you are primarily worried about the possibility of an offensive potential appearing at a certain stage in the systems created within the SDI framework. Moreover, if we agree on a period during which we would not deploy offensive systems and would not withdraw from the Treaty, you will want guarantees regarding the predictability of our behavior. We discussed with General Abrahamson and with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff what steps we could take in order to alleviate your concern about these issues. We proposed "open laboratories" in Geneva, to which you have not given us an answer. According to this proposal and some new aspects, we are ready to undertake a number of programs to strengthen trust, and we hope that this is mutual. These measures could include some traditional steps, such as exchange of data, notification of tests, etc.; as well as an exchange of delegations, including delegations to laser stations at Stanford, to Livermore laboratory and others from our side and corresponding projects on your side. We could show you some of the satellites being created within the SDI framework. In the area of space exchanges, we could use the "Shuttle" and the space station "Mir," for example, for mutual control of work in space. The objects we create could even be inspected by people going into space. On the condition of reciprocity, we are confident that both sides can secure their interests in the area of national security.

Gen. Abrahamson. The Apollo-Soyuz program was a major step forward in terms of strengthening mutual trust. Collaboration in space at a new stage of the

“Shuttle” and “Mir” programs could be a similar step, as well as measures within the framework of our proposal of “open laboratories,” in general.

Crowe. The SDI program is very important to our President and armed forces. This means that we are prepared and striving to seriously consider measures for securing mutual trust.

Akhromeyev. Allow me to repeat our position, which was already presented by the General Secretary at the meeting in the State Department this morning. We consider the main direction of work for strengthened security to be first reduction, and then liquidation of nuclear weapons. We already agreed on the liquidation of two classes of nuclear weapons, now we are conducting negotiations on a 50 percent reduction of strategic offensive weapons, and the negotiations are going rather well. Should these negotiations be successful, there could be further reductions in the future. As the number of offensive weapons decreases, so will the necessity of having defensive weapons. This is true for the USSR and the US, and other countries will have to join the process of disarmament. Moreover, conventional weapons are improving rapidly in terms of power and accuracy. There are hundreds of nuclear energy and chemical facilities in the world, the destruction of which would lead to massive losses. In other words, we need to clearly understand that the time for war is over, nuclear as well as conventional war. On this basis, the question rightfully arises whether anti-missile defense is necessary to a country. If we disregard political and economic factors and follow purely military reasoning, we believe that deployment of an ABM [system] in a country would destabilize the situation, creating a defensive capability in the U.S. for countering a retaliatory nuclear strike from the USSR while preserving its offensive strategic nuclear capability.

Carlucci. Firstly, the SDI program was conceived from the start as a part of our proposal for 50 percent reductions. We are essentially proposing the concept of a stable transition for both sides from a policy of “mutual suicide” to a policy of strategic defense. You are also developing a similar program, only under a different name.

Akhromeyev. Substantial research in this area is being conducted with one significant difference: according to the words of the President and the Secretary of State, if the research is successful, the U.S. plans to start deploying national ABM systems, while the USSR states that it does not have this intention.

Carlucci. But we stated our readiness to collaborate with you during the SDI’s agreed-upon period of non-deployment and non-withdrawal from the Treaty. Moreover, a number of other countries already have, or are planning to obtain, nuclear weapons. The General Secretary stated the USSR’s position very well today, which included his original interpretation of the ABM Treaty. I would like to note that, judging from notes of negotiations, our interpretation of the Treaty differed from yours from the very beginning. As for the U.S. Congress, it has not yet reached a single position on the interpretation of the Treaty; furthermore, this fiscal year it has allocated funds for conducting tests within the framework of the Treaty’s broad interpretation. The SDI program is widely supported in our country and you would be making a fundamental mistake in regards to our political dynamics if you do not

consider this. Any Senator can tell you that the agreement to limit strategic nuclear forces would not be ratified, regardless of how great it was, if it undermines the SDI. You cannot stop the SDI program. We can make agreements about predictability, timeframes, collaboration, etc., but the SDI program will not be the price to pay for limiting strategic nuclear forces, and our President is clear on this point. One more thing: we do not accept restrictions on the levels of parameters we test.

Akhromeyev. To be realistic, we will have to consider the possibility of Congress's position on ratification. But you also should consider that the Soviet position is not the whim of a handful of people, it is the position of an entire nation. As for the military aspect, which we will possibly discuss tomorrow with Admiral Crowe, I would like to say that we are very worried about your intention to build your country's ABM. It is well known that the U.S. conducts and intends to continue conducting a policy toward the USSR based on force. On this basis we draw conclusions about the intended purpose of the ABM system, and we look for a corresponding answer. I hope you are informed about our economic and technological possibilities which, despite certain shortfalls, allow us to respond with measures asymmetrical to the SDI in the event of an unsuccessful outcome of the negotiations. It is not difficult to grasp that in 15–20 years there will be a response to the SDI. There is no reason to think that the country's SDI system will provide an absolute and insurmountable defense.

Carlucci. Tomorrow Admiral Crowe will lay out in more detail our point of view on the advantages that the SDI offers both sides.

Akhromeyev. I am concerned about your words regarding the prospects of START Treaty ratification. It seems that both sides should be thinking about this already at this stage.

Velikhov. I am worried whether we have any guarantee that ultimately a sufficiently stable situation will develop, and that a stable path will lead to it. I am also very worried that we have different opinions on the significance of certain technological achievements, such as lasers, for example. On our side we are skeptical about the possibility of developing weapons based on laser technology, and therefore we wonder whether your scientists are giving you correct information. Regarding the proposal of "open laboratories," it would seem that the only laboratories open would be those working on projects that would prove to be unsuccessful.

Carlucci. During your conversation with Admiral Crowe tomorrow, Mr. Marshal, I expect that these and other purely military questions will be discussed, especially in light of the political atmosphere created at the highest-level meeting.

Akhromeyev. I agree, but I would also like to discuss the issue of reducing military forces and weapons in Europe. Summing up today's conversation I would like to say that, even if it did not lead to concrete decisions, at least it will leave us with a great deal to think about. In conclusion allow me, Mr. Secretary, to thank you for the frank nature of today's conversation.

[Source: *Georgy M. Kornienko Personal Archive. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 51: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–
Gorbachev, Fifth Meeting, Washington, 12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.

December 10, 1987

After raising regional issues briefly the day before, Reagan and Gorbachev devote this entire session to a discussion of Third World conflicts where both countries have significant interests and support opposing parties. Gorbachev pushes hard for bilateral cooperation in settling those conflicts, saying that they affect bilateral relations and could be successfully resolved if both of them showed resolve and a willingness to cooperate. “The world [is] looking for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to cooperate in a businesslike way,” Gorbachev says. On Afghanistan, the Soviet side believes that the U.S. attitude is “you’re there, you should extricate yourselves, it’s your problem.” He asks Reagan to agree “without any publicity” that the Soviets will start their withdrawal and the U.S. will cease its assistance to the rebels. He makes a similar proposal about Nicaragua—to agree to stop outside arms supplies, excluding small arms. Reagan objects, saying that in such a situation the governments would have all the military power and would not allow the opposition to participate in the political process. Therefore, the opposition should also be armed, both in Afghanistan and Nicaragua. He does not respond to Gorbachev’s more general appeal to cooperate on resolving regional conflicts. There is a much greater meeting of the minds over the Iran-Iraq war, with the exception of Gorbachev’s proposal of deploying a U.N. military force. Gorbachev cites a prior, brief one-on-one conversation with Bush, who expressed his opposition to the idea of engaging U.N. forces in the Middle East.

After initial pleasantries, the President opened by saying that he’d had a chance to review the joint statement. He understood that working delegations were now focused on the START and Defense and Space portions of the statement, and suggested that we get a report.

Gorbachev said that meetings were now in progress between Marchal [sic] Akhromeyev and Mr. Nitze. While they were working, he proposed that he and the President could have some further discussions of regional issues, and the President agreed.

Gorbachev asked to say a few words because he had the impression that the U.S. side had not appreciated fully what he had said on regional conflicts the day before. He had sought to emphasize two or three important concepts. First, that regional conflicts [sic] are very worrisome in that they inject tension into U.S.-Soviet relations. It was necessary to find some method or arrangement, some means of acting to permit an interaction between the two countries in the interest of themselves and the parties to conflict. The two sides had to discuss an approach to cooperation.

Gorbachev continued that this caused tension in our relations. We had to find a method of action that would make it possible to take into account the interests of the parties to regional conflicts, as well, of course, as our own interests.

Second, Gorbachev went on, we needed to take account of the trends that have emerged, toward reconciliation among conflicting sides, toward a political settlement of problems. Regional organizations were involved too. A situation had emerged that presents a chance, if we move in a businesslike spirit, for us to play a constructive role.

Take Central America, for instance, Gorbachev said. The Guatemala agreement had been adopted. We could express a positive response to it. For example we could say both sides would not supply arms there except for small arms. This was just an idea. What was important was a positive statement.

On Cambodia, Gorbachev went on, contacts had begun between Sihanouk and the people in power. They had talked. Other forces should of course be brought in. Vietnam had given the Soviets assurances that they will withdraw. The principle of U.S. and Soviet support for a political settlement there was important. In Angola too there were good opportunities to move forward to resolve the conflict politically.

The Middle East was of course a grave conflict, Gorbachev said. It had deep roots. But the whole world believed that an international conference to solve it was necessary. He understand [sic] there were doubts about this in the U.S. But what the Soviet Union supported was not inconsistent with what the U.S. supported. There could be bilateral contacts in that framework. Israel could meet with the Arabs, with whomever it wanted. But mention of a positive response would be good for the world. The world was looking for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to cooperate in a businesslike way.

The day before, Gorbachev went on, they had concentrated on Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war, because these were particularly acute conflicts. But with regard to Afghanistan he had felt there was no interest on the President's part. But if, without any publicity, there was an interest in resolving the problem, the Soviets could withdraw their troops and the U.S. side could stop its assistance to certain forces. If there were agreement to that, the two sides could say that as of a date certain the U.S. would stop its assistance, and the Soviet side could say that its troops would not participate in any military operations. They should let Afghanistan be neutral.

There was a basis for cooperation on Afghanistan, Gorbachev went on. But the U.S. side's attitude seemed to be: you're there, you should extricate yourselves, it's your problem. Naturally, if that were the American attitude, it would be harder for the Soviet Union to extricate itself. The two sides should do better than that.

Gorbachev noted that he accepted the language on regional issues in the joint statement. But what he wanted was practical solutions to the issues.

On the Iran-Iraq war, Gorbachev went on, he could say honestly, with no hidden intent at all, looking the President in the eyes, that the Soviet Union did not

want to create problems for America. It wanted neither economic problems nor solutions which created (tragic) drama for the Administration. American forces were involved. He felt, Gorbachev said, that there was a basis for regional cooperation between the two sides in this area.

He had had a short one-on-one discussion with the Vice President on this, Gorbachev continued. The Vice President had expressed doubt that Gorbachev or the President could entrust their security interests to UN forces. He could say, Gorbachev went on, that the two sides should make those forces deserve trust. This was inherent in the first resolution. Movement could be made. But if the question arose as to a real need to cease the supply of arms, the Soviet Union would support this.

Gorbachev urged the U.S. side to think about these things. It had experienced what kind of people the Iranians were. A precise calculus of what would happen was needed. If they were pushed too hard, there would be an explosion, and then the only thing left to do would be for the U.S. to use the forces it had there. This would push the Iranians further, and doing it could be dangerous not only in the region itself. The Soviet side knew these people. It was not saying it did not want to cooperate with the U.S., with other forces involved. Iran was close to the Soviet Union; it was important to them.

The President said he thought his reply should come when they resumed (for lunch) at the White House. He just wanted to say one thing. It concerned Nicaragua; it also concerned Afghanistan. The Afghanistan government had its own military forces. If the Soviet Union departed that would be fine. But there were the the [sic] mujahadin, who wanted a voice in their own government. If it were denied them, if they were disarmed, they would be at the mercy of the Afghan government. That would not permit equal participation in forming a new government. If both sides were to come together to form one, both would have to be armed. Or one would have to disband the Afghan military for them to be equal.

Similarly in Nicaragua, the President went on, the U.S. side was for a peaceful settlement. We simply wanted the Nicaraguan government to recognize other citizens who did not agree with it. But it was never willing to do that, even though the Contras were prepared to lay down their arms. The Sandinista government just wanted to take ~~over~~ [advantage].⁵⁶ Soviet supplies made it the most powerful military force in the area, not only against the freedom fighters, but more powerful than Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala put together. [*This frightened all in the region and put them on edge.*]

Gorbachev suggested they continue at the White House.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request M01-01 by the National Security Archive.]

⁵⁶ Handwritten correction in the original. [Editors]

Document No. 52: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, Working Luncheon, Washington, 12:40 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

December 10, 1987

This long and substantive lunch discussion picks up where the previous session left off—on the matter of Third World conflicts. One objective is to decide how the joint statement will reflect their discussions of the subject, especially Afghanistan and Nicaragua. The Soviets insist on “American and Soviet sides’ using their influence with the parties to the Afghan conflict to promote national reconciliation” and terminating outside arms flows, but the U.S. side is committed to the survival of the opposition in both countries. Shultz points to the Geneva agreements, which determined that such assistance would stop 60 days after the Soviet withdrawal began. Gorbachev is frustrated that there is very little detail in the joint statement about regional conflicts. The leaders find more understanding on the Iran-Iraq war, where Reagan invites Soviet influence and Gorbachev expresses his desire to help. Shultz calls for a new U.N. Security Council resolution and for invigorating the UNSC, which is exactly what the Soviets want to hear since their chairmanship is coming up.

Over dessert, the conversation assumes a lighter tone. Gorbachev jokes that “contacts between the Soviet and the American military [have] become more vigorous than his own with the Administration.” Indeed, this summit and its preparation included an unprecedented level of joint work by the militaries of both sides, with Akhromeyev playing a prominent role. In a very Russian manner, Reagan and Gorbachev trade old and new jokes and remember their first summit in Geneva. Gorbachev also remarks on the experience of getting out of the car and talking with exuberant crowds on the way to the White House, noting that he developed the practice during his career in the provinces. When he mentions the importance of the provinces and the wisdom of their ways, Reagan retorts that “he agreed more completely with this than with anything else the General Secretary had said over the past three days.”

While walking from the Oval Office meeting, which ended at 12:15 p.m., to the Family Dining Room, the President emphasized to Gorbachev the necessity of Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. The President noted that the occupation was possible due to the Soviets’ extensive support and urged them to use their influence with Hanoi. Lunch began at 12:40.

Gorbachev began by continuing the discussion of Afghanistan from the recently concluded Oval Office meeting. He suggested that the Joint Statement adopt the language on Afghanistan prepared by the working-group. That was enough. He suggested that the Soviets and Americans work together on Afghanistan. He said that he had decided to address this particular issue because he felt the President had responded coolly to yesterday’s discussion. Now he felt the President was receptive, and business-like; and this opened up possibilities of a more useful discussion.

Gorbachev said that maybe the Joint Statement should mention that there had been a discussion of very acute regional problems, an in-depth discussion, regarding Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia. The first thing many people worldwide would want to know was whether the President and the General Secretary had paid attention to regional issues. *Gorbachev* stated that he would really like to work together with the President to resolve regional conflicts.

The President said that perhaps for the Joint Statement we could note agreement that the Soviet Union would stop supplying arms to Nicaragua.

Gorbachev responded that the Joint Statement could say that the two sides accepted and supported the Contadora process and the Guatamala [sic] accords; that they agreed to look at practical measures which would contribute to the Guatamala [sic] Accord process. *Gorbachev* added that in the process of working together, the Soviet Union was ready to stop the supply of arms to Nicaragua. This applied to all except "light arms," or "small police arms." *Gorbachev* said, however, that this should not be included in the Joint Statement.

Secretary Shultz noted that the President was anxious to get regional issues on the table. So the President had cut in toward the end of their conversation earlier in the day to make sure that they were mentioned. *Secretary Shultz* said that on the basis of general observations by the President and the General Secretary, the working groups had the opportunity to exchange ideas. *Shultz* said that these groups had reported to the Foreign Minister and himself yesterday; and, after that, he and *Shevardnadze* had agreed on the regional issues language for the Joint Statement.

Shultz remarked that he and *Shevardnadze* thought it not wise to go into detail on each regional issue. Were we to do this, we would argue over the language and people in the areas affected would not take it well. *Shultz* added that we should build on the rising quality of our regional issues discussions to work together in practical ways.

Gorbachev noted his agreement and said that there was not much in the Joint Statement concerning regional issues. He expressed the wish to share his impressions regarding the American response to his proposals yesterday.

Shultz then said he felt the working group had made progress in clarifying the Soviet view that withdrawal from Afghanistan and national reconciliation need not be linked. This was necessary because national reconciliation would take a great deal of time. Also, in the end, this was something the Afghan people must do among themselves. Understanding this delinkage would help pave the way for the next Geneva round, which should concentrate on the unresolved issue of Soviet withdrawal.

Gorbachev responded that Soviet withdrawal was definitely linked to an American obligation to cut off support for opposition forces on the date Soviet troop withdrawal started. As of that date, Soviet troops would no longer engage in military operations and the ceasefire would go into effect. *Gorbachev* emphasized the importance of the American and Soviet sides' using their influence with

the parties to the Afghan conflict to promote national reconciliation. He said that the Soviet side would tell Najib—and the American side should do the same with the opposition forces—that the creation of a coalition government was their affair. They should find a balance of concessions.

At the same time, *Gorbachev* continued, both the Americans and Soviets should say that they did not want the new Afghanistan to be led by either a pro-American or a pro-Soviet government. Afghanistan should be neutral and non-aligned. Of course, *Gorbachev* added, this was just his projection of how things would develop. *Gorbachev* noted that the situation could develop differently. The Soviets would withdraw and the United States could continue financial and military support for the opposition forces. This would lead to increased tension. *Gorbachev* said that he did not see how the Soviets could withdraw forces in such circumstances. There must be linkage of withdrawal and non-interference.

Gorbachev suggested that after the meeting the two sides move the questions to a practical footing. He said that this would be well-received by public opinion.

Secretary Shultz said that as he and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze discussed following the meeting of the working group yesterday, the Soviet side welcomed American readiness to reaffirm support for the Geneva agreements. This resolved the non-interference issue. The missing piece in Geneva remained the timetable for a troop withdrawal.

Gorbachev interjected “that there must be an end to American support for the opposition forces at the same time.” If there was agreement on this, *Gorbachev* said, let us declare it. If the American side needed more time to think this over, it should take it. But the Soviet side wanted to engage in specific action. *Gorbachev* added that action here would demonstrate American sincerity in addressing the Afghan problem. It would also help the Soviets judge American intentions regarding other regional conflict situations.

Secretary Shultz responded that both the United States and the Soviet Union accepted the Geneva agreements. These agreements covered the issue of outside support. According to the agreements, after the signing of the accords, a troop withdrawal would begin; and 60 days after this, American support would cease.

Gorbachev rejoined that he understood three points in the Geneva agreements were settled. The fourth point remained to be settled.

Shultz noted that the linkage of national reconciliation and troop withdrawal had been a problem; but now Soviet statements indicated that there was no such linkage, and the American reaffirmation of support for the Geneva accords meant that we could devote our attention to the fourth point, a timetable for troop withdrawal. This could get the process moving.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze remarked that there was no linkage “in effect” between troop withdrawal and national reconciliation. He added that national reconciliation would be a long process.

Gorbachev said that the Soviet side had already confirmed this. He then asked if we could state that after the Summit we would begin work to consider practical, concrete measures with the parties concerned.

Secretary Shultz agreed.

Gorbachev then proposed that the Joint Statement on regional issues mention that Afghanistan was discussed.

When *Secretary Shultz* noted that Afghanistan was already in the statement, *Gorbachev* suggested that it mention other regions discussed, such as Cambodia, South Africa, and the Middle East.

Shultz noted that most of these were included.

Shevardnadze remarked that Central America had been discussed and was not in the Joint Statement. So it should be added, as should southern Africa.

Gorbachev said that this would show the responsibility of the United States and the Soviet Union—the degree of responsibility incumbent on us in handling regional conflicts.

Secretary Shultz said that the Joint Statement noted the dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States should have as its goal “to help the parties to regional conflicts find peaceful solutions that advance their independence, freedom, and security.” *Shultz* added that our discussion on regional issues had been getting better and better.

Central Committee International Department Chief Dobrynin suggested that the President and the General Secretary give instructions to improve this language even more, perhaps by adding regular consultations.

Noting the hectic pace of the past three days, *Gorbachev* asked the President if he had been able to look at the proposal *Gorbachev* had passed along from North Korea.

National Security Advisor Powell answered that the proposal was currently being staffed; so there was no response yet.

Gorbachev said that he could tell the North Koreans that he had fulfilled their request by giving the President their proposal, and that it was now being reviewed at the staff level.

Powell noted that we would handle the proposal in a private manner as *Gorbachev* had suggested. *Gorbachev* remarked that the North Koreans wanted it that way. And the President, by immediately placing it in his coat pocket, showed that he too wanted to play it close to the vest.

Shultz then said that the United States might propose to respond to the North Koreans through Moscow—perhaps through Foreign Minister *Shevardnadze*.

Gorbachev agreed. He then asked for the Administration’s evaluation of the Gulf situation following yesterday’s discussion. *Gorbachev* said that he was asking this in a straight-forward way, since it seemed that someone was pushing the Administration to rash steps without considering what might happen. This could lead to a situation that would not be satisfactory either for the Americans or the Soviets. *Gorbachev* thought that the UN had not used all of the potential of Security Council Resolution 598. *Gorbachev* said that he was not trying to procrastinate. He knew that decisive action was needed. In an aside *Gorbachev* then noted it had been decided yesterday that some aspects of the conversation should be handled in a confidential manner.

Secretary Shultz said that he saw the situation as follows: the Iraqi side had unambiguously said it would accept 598. Iran was almost impossible for UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar [sic] to talk to, never mind to get something out of. According to our intelligence, Iran had adopted a strategy of putting off the Security Council.

Gorbachev agreed that Iran probably had such strategy; it would be hard to say anything else.

Shultz then said that UN Secretary General de Cuellar [sic] was totally frustrated. De Cuellar [sic] felt it was now up to the Security Council to act. *Shultz* said that this led us to conclude that the Soviet term as Chairman of the Security Council should be a decisive one. *Shultz* suggested that the Soviets and the Americans work to energize the Secretary General in his mediation role pursuant to resolution 598. *Shultz* noted that we could aid the UN Secretary General's effort if we seriously started work on a second resolution. *Shultz* said that it would be useful to announce work now. This could be done by our Ambassadors at the UN. We could agree to instruct them to start. *Shultz* gave two reasons for this. The first was that this represented our best chance to have the UN Secretary General achieve progress on the Iran-Iraq War. Secondly, we must worry about the dignity and credibility of the Security Council, and not allow Iran to make it look foolish.

In *Gorbachev's* view the American and Soviet sides thought basically the same about this. *Gorbachev* requested that the two sides make precise calculations regarding prospects in the Gulf. He said that he would very much like cooperation in the Security Council. He added that this could create a precedent for cooperation elsewhere—Afghanistan, the Middle East.

Secretary Shultz agreed regarding the importance of cooperation. He remarked on his presence in the Security Council chamber when Resolution 598 was passed last July. He said that each government went around the table and spoke, and then voted. All hands were raised. All had the sense that it was a very special moment.

Gorbachev said that he saw new elements on the Gulf war. These had to be sorted out. *Gorbachev* noted in this connection the new statement by the Iraqi Foreign Minister—that Iraq was no longer against parallel implementation of all paragraphs of Resolution 598 (including that of an investigative body into the origins of the war). In *Gorbachev's* view, this represented fundamental movement.

Secretary Shultz noted that Iraq accepted 598 in all its parts.

Shevardnadze remarked that Iran said the same.

Secretary of Defense Carlucci discussed the American military presence in the Gulf, noting that *Gorbachev* had raised it several times. *Carlucci* said that it was important to say here that the U.S. had no plans to change its current posture in the Gulf. We were currently escorting our 20th convoy, and most of these convoys had proceeded without incident.

Gorbachev then asked if it was necessary to have that many ships in a convoy operation.

Carlucci answered that we had now reached a steady state; so we were looking at ways to change the mix and the number of ships which would still enable us to deal with the risks. He said he was sure Gorbachev would agree that so long as American forces were in the Gulf, they must be able to defend themselves if attacked. *Carlucci* then noted that American forces were in a fully defensive posture; they represented no threat to Iran at all. If, however, our forces were attacked, or if it appeared that they would be attacked, they would take the appropriate defensive measures. But there would be no offensive operations, except in retaliation.

Gorbachev said that he wanted to be clear on this. As he understood it, Secretary *Carlucci* had said that, since the situation was now “steady,” the Americans were looking at ways to reduce their presence in the Gulf.

Carlucci responded that he did not want to predict that there would be reductions. But we were looking at ways to meet the threat in the Gulf. If it seemed possible to reduce, we would do so because we did not wish to deploy more ships than the situation warranted; everything depended on the level of threat.

Gorbachev then noted, with pleasure, that dessert was served, and dessert was the favorite course of the meal for Americans. *Gorbachev* joked that last night the President and he had no choice but to eat all of their dessert. They decided to do so and then engage in self-criticism.

The President agreed.

Gorbachev then remarked that he feared contacts between the Soviet and the American military had become more vigorous than his own with the Administration. According to *Gorbachev*, Marshall Akhromeyev had said that in his conversations at the Pentagon, it had been agreed to expand military contacts to keep pace with political ones. *Gorbachev* affirmed the importance of this suggestion. He said that this was consistent with the statement of the President that the Soviets and the Americans had no intention to fight—or be at war with—each other. So the military should try to establish an atmosphere of trust.

Secretary of Defense Carlucci noted that the Soviets and the Americans should talk with each other regarding defense doctrines such as military sufficiency.

The President then said that this discussion of military cooperation came at a perfect time. Chief of Staff Baker had just brought him a poster of a meeting on the Elbe between a Soviet and an American soldier at the end of World War II. The President said that the American soldier was now retired from the military and the Soviet soldier was part of the Summit delegation. The President said it would be wonderful if the two could meet.

Soviet Ambassador Dubinin interjected that the Soviet and American soldiers had met three days ago at the Soviet Embassy and now there was a second picture of them together.

The President said that we would have to get that picture to go along with this poster.

When *Chief of Staff Baker* said it would be wonderful if the President and the General Secretary would sign the poster, both the President and the General Secretary agreed.

USIA Director Wick said that he had met at USIA with Politburo member Yakovlev and the heads of TASS, Novosti, and Gostelradio. All had agreed and affirmed that there would be not only arms reduction, but also an end to disinformation. There was agreement to have joint meetings to determine where instances of such disinformation appeared.

Gorbachev said that, in other words, both sides spoke against psychological warfare.

Only with verification, *Wick answered.*

Shevardnadze joked that disarmament would come faster than agreement on this.

The President then remarked that Director Wick should have said “*doveryai and proveryai.*”

Gorbachev then referred to his meeting with Congressional leaders. He noted that in the United States, there were many complaints and suggestions regarding Soviet human rights practices. *Gorbachev* said that this was “very unnecessary.” He then mentioned a proposal he had made to the Congressional group: that the Supreme Soviet and the Congress organize seminars or colloquia on human rights. These should be conducted in a constructive fashion. The American side would present its analysis and the Soviet side would reciprocate concerning the human rights situation both in the Soviet Union and the United States. Then all of these questions would be discussed. However, human rights questions must be placed on a responsible footing. It would be unacceptable for one side to assume the role of a prosecutor and the other side that of the accused; or one side the role of the teacher and the other that of the student. *Gorbachev* emphasized Soviet readiness to discuss human rights constructively.

Gorbachev said that soon he would be saying goodbye to the President and the President’s colleagues. *Gorbachev* said he had arrived at the conclusion that the third summit had been a landmark. It had witnessed important agreements and other questions had been discussed intensively. Most importantly the atmosphere had been good. There had been more elements of mutual understanding. *Gorbachev* said that he would like to pay tribute to the contribution of the President toward making this a successful summit, as well as to the contributions of other American participants. *Gorbachev* added that he would like the momentum achieved at the summit to continue. He then said that on his way to the White House lunch he had ridden with Vice President Bush. He had looked out the car window and seen Americans responding warmly to what had happened in the negotiations. When the car had stopped at a red light, he jumped out of the car and had had a spontaneous conversation with some passersby. When it was time to go, he did not want to leave the conversation.

Chief of Staff Senator Baker interjected that this was known by American politicians as “working the crowd.”

Gorbachev remarked that he had always had this style—throughout his entire career. He said that he had become well known around the world over the past two years because of his position. Before that, however, he had spent his entire

career in the provinces. He had developed this style then and there was nothing to change. He then commented that there was more common sense in the provinces than in a nation's capital. He quipped that if our ambassadors reported information based only on sources in the capital, he would have to seriously question their reporting.

The President responded that he agreed more completely with this than with anything else the General Secretary had said over the past three days. The President said that he often wondered what would happen if he and other leaders closed the doors of their offices and quietly slipped away. How long would it be before people missed them?

Gorbachev responded that in his case, within 56 days of his "disappearance" earlier this year, people had begun to say that he was dead or had been dismissed; in fact, he had done good work during this period on many things, including the visit to the United States.

Chief of staff Baker said that the conversations between the President and Gorbachev had given him the impression that, as politicians, they were alike in many ways:

- They were strong personalities;
- They knew what they believed;
- They knew where they wanted to go.

Baker added that this augured [sic] well for our two countries.

Gorbachev agreed. He said that he did not often hear such complimentary assessments. Most people tried to see the problems, but that was Yakovlev's and Wick's department.

The President agreed with Gorbachev, joking that he could never understand why Gorbachev opposed him on so many things.

Gorbachev rejoined that the areas of agreement would increase and disagreements decrease, provided both sides moved.

The President said he would like to return to the subject of Iran. He commented that some of his harsh feelings toward Iran had come from the fact that in 1978 he and the First Lady had visited there for several days. They had shopped for rugs in the bazaar. The President said that he was still trying to get even.

Noting that Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had left the lunch to compare the final draft of the Joint Statement, *Chief of Staff Baker* said he would go and see if it was ready.

The President remarked that he and the General Secretary had the right to feel good about the summit. When they had first met in Geneva, the President had told Gorbachev that theirs was a unique situation. They represented two countries that could initiate another world war. Or, they could make sure that there would not be another world war.

Gorbachev remembered this and agreed with the President.

The President noted too that both he and Gorbachev had problems with bureaucracy.

Gorbachev also agreed.

The President then remembered a World War II incident when he was in the military. There was a warehouse full of filing cabinets full of obsolete records. He had asked, going up the chain of command, for permission to destroy these documents in order to make space for current records. The answer came down through the chain of command that the request was approved—so long as copies were made of the records to be destroyed.

Gorbachev said that the President's anecdote reminded him of a joke about Russian business. Someone bought a case of Russian vodka; that person emptied the bottles by pouring out the vodka. He then returned the bottles for money which he used to purchase more bottles of vodka. This was Russian business. He then noted that this was an old joke, 30 maybe 40 years old.

The President recalled the joke of a man who was driving down the road and spotted a chicken running alongside his car. The man sped up, yet the chicken ran right alongside of him. Then the chicken went into high gear, passed the car, and turned off on a side road. The driver of the car followed down that side road, saw a farmer and stopped to ask him if he had seen a chicken pass by. The farmer said he had seen the chicken and, in fact, had raised it. The driver asked if it was true the chicken had three legs. The farmer said yes, explaining that both he and his wife liked to eat chicken legs. Then they had a son, who also liked to eat chicken legs. So the farmer had decided to raise a chicken with three legs. The driver then asked how the chicken tasted. The farmer told him that he did not know; he had never been able to catch it.

Gorbachev then mentioned the Russian writers Ilf and Petrov. They wrote humorous, satirical novels. They left as a heritage notebooks consisting of thoughts and ideas for writing future books. *Gorbachev* said he particularly liked one idea in these notebooks. A man was accused of driving a government-owned car to a public bath. To defend himself, the man said that he had not been to the bath for two years. *Gorbachev* said that the same could be true of our governments. We would not want to be in the position of defending ourselves by saying that we have done nothing when we should have acted.

On this note, the luncheon ended, at 2:10.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 53: Record of Conversation between Bush and Gorbachev Following Summit, Washington

December 10, 1987

After successful completion of the summit, Bush accompanies Gorbachev to the airport. During the 35-minute ride, the two engage in a trusting and wide-ranging conversation that they would often remember later as helping to lay the foundation for future cooperation. Bush seeks to warn Gorbachev about possible “unpleasantries” during the upcoming U.S. presidential election campaign and assures him that cooperation will continue and grow if he is elected president—which he believes is likely. Bush reviews other candidates’ chances and asserts that Gorbachev would do better with a Republican president because “we needed Richard Nixon to go to China” and Reagan to ratify a treaty reducing nuclear weapons. Gorbachev would generally do well with Democrats, he continues, but they “do not guarantee delivery.” That would be a role for a conservative, and there is “nobody to the right of Reagan.” Gorbachev thanks the vice president for this candid talk and assures him of his readiness for continued cooperation. They also discuss other issues including China, where their views are similar. On the plane, Gorbachev turns to his interpreter, Pavel Palazhchenko, and says, “Pavel, I know that you could not take notes, but try to write a record of that conversation with Bush in the car. It was not a routine talk.”⁵⁷ Palazhchenko does so, and Gorbachev later uses portions of the record in his Russian-language memoir—although not in the English version.

Bush: My wife and I watched your press conference practically in full. It made a very strong impression on us. The visit is ending successfully.

Gorbachev: Yes, this is the thought I wanted to express in my introductory statement and in answers to questions. Without exaggeration but still to make it clear that we are evidently entering a new stage in our relations. New opportunities are obvious. We have to use them to the maximum.

Bush: I agree. Now we have conditions for that. You personally contributed to it greatly.

As part of my electoral campaign, today I took part in a live TV show “Questions and Answers,” talked with residents of the Midwest, our heartland. There, the reaction to your visit is literally verging on euphoria. The treaty you and the president signed enjoys huge support.

Gorbachev: This is very valuable. Overall, something is clearly changing. It is changing right in front of our eyes, literally during these days. See, for example,

⁵⁷ Palazhchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze*, p. 93.

the people gathered on sidewalks, welcoming us, waving their hands. Take our stop today and the conversation with the people!

Bush: It is being shown on TV again and again. There happened to be only one cameraman with a camera there—from CNN.

Gorbachev: That is good.

Bush: I have to say that you answered questions at the press conference very well. Some of them were not easy ones. For example, the question by [*Washington Post* columnist] Mary McGrory about whether the summit met your expectations in terms of arms control issues. By the way, she is a very good journalist. But in response, you, and very rightly so, cited your introductory statement—it had indeed said everything.

Gorbachev: That's why it was quite extensive. But my main thought right now is that we have to do a lot of work in the coming months.

Bush: I would like to speak about the coming months. For me they will be mainly occupied by the electoral campaign. Everything will become clear by about mid-to-late March. If my campaign goes as well as it is going right now (and according to the polls, it is going well), and I am able to achieve significant success in the primaries, then the issues of my nomination from the Republican Party will be settled. If it fails, then [Robert] Dole will be nominated. The rest—[Pierre] DuPont, [Jack] Kemp, Robinson [sic: Pat Robertson] and [Alexander] Haig—do not have a serious chance.

I am committed to the cause of improving Soviet-American relations. If I get elected, I will continue what we started. Dole, by the way, could also make a very good president, including with regard to developing Soviet-American relations. All in all, if we take a broader view of things, it would probably be better for you to deal with a Republican president. Of course, we may face more difficulties of one kind or another, but that is not the main thing. In the past, we needed Richard Nixon to go to China. Today, we need Ronald Reagan to sign and ensure ratification of the treaty reducing nuclear weapons. This is a role for a conservative. And there is nobody in America to the right of Reagan. There is no [such thing as] right of Reagan. There is only the extremist fringe. But they don't count. The broad spectrum [of the population] is in favor of the treaty.

You would do generally well with the Democrats. But they, as we say, “do not guarantee delivery.” They cannot ensure support for big agreements. Although, I have to admit, your relations with any of the currently running Democrats would probably develop quite smoothly.

In the coming months, the busy electoral campaign notwithstanding, I would be willing, if need be, to assist you with resolving some Soviet-American issues, to remove possible unpleasanties. Of course, I am hoping that there will be no such issues. But if they emerge, I have certain capacities of my own—to make an impact, to influence things. [...]

Gorbachev: I appreciate what you just said. I appreciate the spirit in which it was said. I also believe that staying in contact as you proposed could be useful. You already expressed this idea to A.F. Dobrynin, and he told me about it. I

support this. And if you are destined to become the leader of this country, then I hope that we will continue our interaction.

Bush: What I am destined to—this, as I said, will become clear in the next three or four months.

My position is quite unique. The vice President does not have a defined “sphere of work.” But it gives one an opportunity to see things in a broad perspective, to think about them. I have extensive contacts.

I met with [Polish leader Wojciech] Jaruzelski recently. I was impressed with him. I had an opportunity to get to know him during [my] visit to Poland. The visit was useful. Our talk with Jaruzelski was good, substantive. He is an interesting person and a strong leader who inherited a difficult situation. But I think he chose the right road.

Gorbachev: Jaruzelski called me and told about your visit and conversation with you. He is satisfied with the conversation. [He] spoke well about you personally.

Bush: This is good to hear. I hope he is not too angry with me for meeting with [Solidarity leader Lech] Walesa. Poland is not an ordinary country. Things are not going easy for them, and, by the way, during the visit we discussed opportunities for resolving the problems in our economic relations to help development of the economy of that country. There are such opportunities.

Gorbachev: And you and I have a great potential. We should use it. [...]

Bush: If I may, I would like to ask about Korea, especially because you’ve already mentioned it during the negotiations and passed on the document, which I looked at. This is my question: what do you think about Kim Il Sung’s son? What are his chances—will he be pushed aside or gradually move up to the top position?

Gorbachev: You know, we should figure this out. Maybe both of us should. This is an issue to think about. I have never met him. He does not leave the country very often. As you know, he is not without talent. But they have all kinds of people there.

Bush: We do not have [diplomatic] relations with North Korea, and we know very little about them. But judging by the information that we have, he is some kind of brat, a spoiled child. They say they are not too happy with him there.

Gorbachev: It is hard to tell. Obviously, his father is a greater figure. I would limit myself to this.

Bush: I understand. And how, in your opinion, will Soviet-Chinese relations develop, the policies of China?

Gorbachev: We analyzed this and came to a firm conclusion: China will always have an independent policy. And this, as we believe, is positive. [We] will develop our relations with China. China will of course defend its own interests, and we ours. But we can find a balance. We are ready, and I think Soviet-Chinese relations have a future. At the same time, we do not intend to harm U.S.-China relations in any way.

Bush: I agree with you. I do not see any danger for the United States in the development of Soviet-Chinese relations. I am often asked about this and every time I respond that I do not see any danger.

Gorbachev: China will be more and more active.

Bush: True, its energy already causes concerns among its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region, and ASEAN.

Gorbachev: Yes, we noted that.

Bush: Especially on the part of Indonesia.

Gorbachev: It is clear that China will be reaching for international connections more and more actively, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. And the Soviet Union will as well. We are also part of that region.

When I spoke in Vladivostok, I expressed one thought, which I would really like to bring to the attention of the American leadership: by entering the Asia-Pacific region, the Soviet Union is not in any way trying to hurt anyone's interests, especially not undermine the old interests of the United States. We understand the importance of that region for you and for the West. We did not and do not have any secret intentions, nothing except for the desire to interact and develop cooperation with the countries of the region.

Bush: That's the way I think about it too.

[Source: *Record was compiled from Gorbachev, Zhizn' i reformy, vol. 2, pp. 67–69, and Gorbachev, Otvechaya na vyzov vremeni, pp. 189–191. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 54: Notes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session

December 17, 1987

At this Politburo session devoted to the results of Gorbachev's visit to Washington, the Soviet leader gives a very high assessment of the summit and the INF Treaty. He considers the Washington summit to have been "bigger than Geneva or Reykjavik" in terms of building mutual understanding with the U.S. leadership. He notes the change in Reagan's behavior and emphasizes that the principals spoke "as equals and seriously, each keeping his ideology to himself." Gorbachev stresses the historic nature of the INF Treaty and full Politburo support for it, because "the entire development of Soviet-American relations and the normalization of the international situation in general" depended on the outcome of this issue. He also informs the Politburo about his and the delegation's meetings with Americans from all walks of life, and describes the strong support for perestroika in the United States.

Gorbachev. On the outcomes of the visit to Washington. This is bigger than Geneva or Reykjavik, with full understanding of their importance and the fact that without them Washington would not have happened. It is an even more significant sign that the course we have set is being realized. We are once again convinced that the best line is the principal-based and constructive one. And the main lesson we learned from this is a lesson for the future.

Much less apparent in Washington was the manner Reagan had used with us in the beginning—to make accusations, put forth claims, blame us for the crises of the modern world, and to present himself as all good and right, in a word: [Reagan appeared] either in the role of a prosecutor or of a teacher. But already during the first conversation we agreed on this matter, even though there was a moment of a certain sharpness. I told him: "You are not a prosecutor and I am not a defendant. You are not a teacher and I am not a pupil. And vice versa. Otherwise we will not be able to do anything."

This was an important moment in establishing mutual understanding with the American leadership. It was probably even a key moment in finding a common language: speaking as equals and seriously, each keeping his ideology to himself. Of course this time we also had a response to the usual human rights claims that by now set our teeth on edge. But we did not succumb to that temptation. This approach justified itself when the talks entered the level of concrete discussion of concrete problems: the discussion was realistic without any kind of euphoria, without illusions, with readiness for reasonable compromises and mutual constructiveness.

The central moment of the visit was the INF Treaty. We had total understanding—and we came with this, having full support of the Politburo—that everything would depend on the outcome of this question: the entire development of

Soviet-American relations and the normalization of the international situation in general.

Therefore it was very important not to give up in the face of military-technical difficulties, which were by no means minor. The fact that we overcame them was in large part due to our strong policy determination to cross this barrier, to achieve the Treaty. As for untying the truly difficult military-technical knots, I must say our colleagues were at their best, and I want to acknowledge the experienced work of Marshall Akhromeyev and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Bessmertnykh.

The experience of the last two years as we started to act in the spirit of the new thinking showed that we need practical results, we need a real life test for the ideas we proposed and that we wanted to introduce to international political practice. The world was waiting for it and demanding it. People's trust in our new foreign policy depended on it. We wanted and strived to test the ideas in real life. And the problem of the INF Treaty was just the deciding factor in this.

It was a trial for us. But it was also a trial of our partners, the Americans; a trial of the earnestness of their approach to the key issue of today's world. It was a practical test of the statements they made at the highest-level conferences, saying that nuclear war is unacceptable, that the U.S. is striving for disarmament, and that they want normal international relations.

Progress in this direction also opened the way for other directions of disarmament, namely nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons. It created the background for similar businesslike approaches to regional problems and bilateral relations.

The meeting in Washington was also an important test on another fundamental idea of the new thinking—that its success and effectiveness depend on the state of affairs at home, on the *perestroika*.

It is not only a question of objectively tying together the two processes and not only our sincere, without any ulterior motives, connection of them in our conception, in our policies, in the development of our theories. It is also the question of the world's perception and understanding of this connection. And even though it would seem that this is the moral side of the issue, it also had an enormous practical meaning.

In Washington we saw for the first time with our own eyes what a great interest exists for everything that is happening here, for our *perestroika*. And the goodwill, even enthusiasm to some degree, with which prim Washington received us, was an indicator of the changes that have started taking place in the West. These changes evidence the beginning of the crumbling "image of the enemy," beginning of the destruction of the "Soviet military threat" myth. That was momentous to us. And it was noticed in the entire world.

A visit is an official action. We went there for talks with the President and representatives of his Administration. But we also met with America, with all kinds of America—the youth, the intellectuals, the artists, the press, the business circles and even the elite of the officials, the ones who service the Administration.

And another very important aspect of the visit is truly getting to know a world which is in essence different. You mutually recognize this world through the common logic, which is dictated by the growing integrity and interdependency of the world.

Major American figures wanted to meet with us. There was even some bias in the papers, saying that Gorbachev did not come here only to talk with the President. He came to influence all of America, including the people who ultimately decide its economy and politics.

We also noted that our partners did not want to give anything specific to the press on the progress of the one-on-one talks with the President and the delegations. We were prepared to do this. Thus, we were clearly winning in the question of glasnost. This emphasized the sincerity and honesty of our position and the fact that we came to really get things done, to deal with political policy, not play the games of the past.

In our contacts with the different kinds of America we saw that our *perestroika* has reached even the American society, which has been driven to the limit with antisovietism. People were not troubled by the fact that we might be behind in some aspects, such as the economy for example.

They were interested in the fact that our society has moved forward, that it is finding a new movement and is inspired to change democratically. As a matter of fact, this interested everybody most of all during our contacts with the people.

We felt, perhaps for the first time, in Washington what the human factor is also [important] in world politics. Until then we had gone by a rather hackneyed formula: foreign policy is about personal contact between leaders of countries, leaders of governments and in general exchanges on the level of people who make politics.

This is understood. But even with this idea we meant that even the personal contacts still took place between representatives of radically different and irreconcilable systems, and the people were only “representatives.” We saw Reagan only as the embodiment of the most conservative part of American capitalism and the masters of the military-industrial complex. But it turned out that at the same time the politicians, including the leading heads of state, if they are truly responsible people, also represent the purely human qualities, interests, and the hopes of the common people. Particularly of those people who vote for them at elections and who connect the country’s dignity and their patriotism with the politician’s name and personal qualities. At the same time, they can be guided by the most normal human motives and feelings. And it turns out that in our day all of this has enormous significance for making political decisions.

We were prepared and even ourselves strove to understand this aspect of relations with the American leadership, and with the leadership of other countries as well. In other words, we wanted to include the purely human factor into international political policy. This is an important aspect of the new thinking. And it produced results. It seems in Washington we felt it distinctly for the first time.

The visit to Washington had another aspect as well—the European aspect. Undoubtedly, everybody expected results; undoubtedly, all serious politicians

understood that all further development of world events will depend on the progress of Soviet-American relations.

At the same time there was another level of thinking—the bloc and national-egoistical thinking, which was superimposed with the engrained ideas of a bipolar world and the idea that the decisive role belongs to the superpowers and they can do a great deal behind the backs of other states, against the interests of other states and at the expense of international politics. This came through especially, if you remember, in Reykjavik. There was a similar suspicion in the international atmosphere during our visit to Washington.

However, we were certain that the logic of disarmament would dispel these fears and suspicions. This would be especially relevant for Europe, since we were primarily dealing with European nuclear weapons.

Also, I wanted to let the Americans know that we will not retract from the path of democratization. Of course, we also have to carefully mind its socialist nature. The people will protect this aspect of the matter. Sometimes this protection is even reminiscent of conservatism, as if to say: we live modestly but securely. The people value this.

But I have to say that some of our people are afraid of democracy. This fear is caused by the fact that the personnel does not want to change its work methods. Here is a story: in Yaroslavl' the workers of one factory—27 thousand people—spoke against the management's independent decision. The comrades in the administration and in the party committee call the headquarters, saying: be prepared, there might be a riot. That is what we do instead of talking with people. As it is, when they spoke with the people everything was settled and the arguments were understood, and the people agreed with the management's decision. We are used to calling the fire squad as soon as anything happens!

We invited the people to participate in leading the government, we encourage them to act, to practice self-management, but the bosses won't let them. That's their democracy for you! In general we are developing this kind of a layout: some people are "renovationists," ardent followers of *perestroika* who are trying to get something done, who bruise themselves with mistakes but learn from them. Then there are the others, who are "always right," who sit and wait for the others to break their necks. In the Politburo we need to see all of this.

The Party is awakening to new work. But this is happening slowly. We see even such things as engineers and specialists join the apparatus of the Ministries and build a wall against the demands of the working class, against its striving for something new.

Comrades, we are in the middle of a real revolution! We should not be afraid of a revolutionary frenzy. Otherwise we will not achieve anything. There will be losses and retreats, but we will be victorious only on the revolutionary tracks. But we still have not tuned ourselves to revolutionary work methods. Some kind of revolutionaries we are! We are still afraid of something.

We should not be afraid. And it suits us to appear to the whole world as people who are ready to go to the very end in our revolutionary *perestroika*.

Some people speak of a convergence (Galbraith, for example), others speak of Gorbachev's unpredictability. They write about his surprises. *The Washington Post* published an article titled "The Two Gorbachevs." It is difficult for them to unite our striving for peace, collaboration, and good-neighborly relations with the socialist nature of our *perestroika*. We ourselves have not quite mastered these dialectics.

So we should not be surprised that they cannot make ends meet and keep searching for some kind of dirty trick from Gorbachev, some kind of change in the Kremlin, which, it turns out, planned the entire *perestroika* only to trick the West and lull their vigilance. [...]

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2, Opis 2. Published in Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., V Politburo TsK KPSS, pp. 278–279. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Chapter 4

THE MOSCOW SUMMIT, 1988

Ronald Reagan declared the end of the Cold War while standing in the Kremlin. It was the most remarkable moment of the Moscow summit of May-June 1988. Indeed, the summit featured a multitude of scenes even Hollywood would hardly dare to invent. For example, as Reagan strolled through Red Square a U.S. military aide followed a few steps behind carrying the nuclear war codes targeting that very spot as “ground zero” in the event of World War III. Later, the crowd on the Arbat, the lively pedestrian avenue of souvenir shops and street music, almost crushed Reagan in an embrace of Russian babushkas. The president and his wife, never themselves regular church-goers, met with bearded Orthodox priests at the Danilov Monastery to talk about freedom of religion. Then, before a bust of Lenin, Reagan addressed students at the Soviet Union’s Harvard—Moscow State University—looking for all the world as if he were their commencement speaker. The show was spectacular, and a good thing too, because the summit accomplished almost nothing of substance—other than providing a venue for displaying the “human factor” and for Reagan’s declaration, which barely registered in Washington.

The signing of the INF Treaty at the Washington summit in December 1987 had been a clear success, even with grumblings from the Soviet military about concessions. After that achievement, both leaders were hoping for one more towering breakthrough in this final year of the Reagan administration—a goal about which they had spoken since their first meeting—a treaty not just limiting but actually reducing strategic armaments. In fact, the year 1988 began with televised addresses by Gorbachev to the American people and by Reagan to the Soviet people, in which both leaders referred to START as their top priority. George Shultz remembers that he “drove hard in early 1988, with full support from President Reagan, to convert our agreements on the main elements of START into a completed treaty,” but that the “naysayers” took a “real pint of blood” from his efforts.¹ Gorbachev believed he could build on the existing partnership and understood that he needed to move fast before the change of administrations early in the new year. What he did not know was that stasis had already set in at the White House, and that Reagan, with his conflict-averse hands-off management style, was not the man to force the action. Ironically, when Shultz came to Moscow in February 1988, Gorbachev asked him if the administration could just stay for four more years to complete all their plans.²

¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1085.

² Document No. 55.

The major disjuncture between the superpowers in 1988 came down to this matter of trajectory. Gorbachev was prepared to move full speed ahead, surrounded by advisers who shared his views on U.S.-Soviet relations and enjoying full authority as a popular general secretary. Reagan had already entered “lame duck” territory in his last year, weakened by the lingering Iran-contra investigations and overshadowed by the presidential campaign featuring his own vice president. Even more important to the limbo in Washington, most of Reagan’s advisers were still ambivalent, if not hostile, to the prospect of rapidly improving relations with the USSR, stuck as they were in the Cold War. For example, Robert Gates, the deputy director of the CIA, was especially wary of Gorbachev’s reforms, believing that such change would only turn the USSR into a more competitive and stronger adversary.³ From time to time, these adversarial themes came up in Reagan’s speeches, such as his address in Springfield, Massachusetts, in late April 1988—produced by the hard-line speechwriting shop at the White House and not cleared with Secretary Shultz—which sounded to the Soviets like another “evil empire” sermon.⁴

But the empire was busy carrying out an arms race in reverse—most notably in Afghanistan. The Soviet leadership was still hopeful the U.S. side would honor the commitment they had made in December 1985 in Geneva that U.S. assistance to the *mujahedin* would cease once Soviet forces were withdrawn and the Geneva accords signed. As far as the decision to withdraw, the Soviets had arrived at it much earlier, after extensive internal discussions that started immediately after Gorbachev came to power in March 1985.⁵ Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had informed Shultz of the decision to withdraw already in September 1987, but still the U.S. side was not convinced. The CIA, in fact, concluded the Soviets would not pull out. Two senior CIA officials (Gates and Fritz Ermarth) bet personal pocket money (\$50 and \$25) against one of Shultz’s top aides, Michael Armacost, that the Soviets would not end their occupation.⁶ However, Reagan’s stance on supplying the opposition had gradually changed and during the 1987 Washington summit he was unwilling to restate his 1985 commitment. Shultz still seemed to favor the cessation of arms supplies, but the internal struggle within the administration, the Charlie Wilson campaign in Congress, and Reagan’s personal commitment to the “freedom fighters” undermined the positions that had previously been achieved.

Afghanistan was a constant theme in the preparatory meetings for the Moscow summit, especially in February and March 1988. The two sides staged a series of very productive ministerial meetings that spring—with Shultz in Moscow

³ Gates, “Gorbachev’s Gameplan,” November 24, 1987, U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive (Document E34 in Washington INF summit release).

⁴ See Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 293.

⁵ Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, pp. 82–83.

⁶ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, pp. 274–275.

on February 21–23 and April 21–24, Shevardnadze in Washington on March 21–23, and Shultz and Shevardnadze in Geneva on May 11–12. Since the Soviets had already committed themselves to the withdrawal, communicated it to their Afghan allies and to the Americans, then publicly announced it on February 8, 1988, there was little Gorbachev or Shevardnadze had to bargain with to change American policy. Shevardnadze passionately defended the process of national reconciliation and was concerned that if American assistance persisted, the Najibullah regime would fall and be replaced by religious fundamentalists, which would negate all Soviet efforts to create a friendly or at least non-aligned government on their southern border. But of course, it was the Reagan administration's goal to see Najibullah gone, and now this goal seemed finally attainable, so Shultz held firmly to the position that the United States would retain the right to supply the "freedom fighters." During Shultz's visit to Moscow in February, the Soviet side had agreed to sign the Geneva accords even while implicitly accepting the fact that equipping the opposition would continue through Pakistan.⁷

The Geneva accords were signed on April 14, 1988, and the Soviet leadership announced the withdrawal would begin in a month, on May 15—frontloaded so that it would be completed within ten months. The superpowers would be the guarantors of the Geneva agreements but the Soviet side was concerned that, whatever those agreements said, the U.S. would keep strengthening the most radical sections of the fundamentalist opposition. They had good reason to be concerned—Reagan had just reiterated his support for the rebels in his Springfield speech on April 21. The Americans finally achieved their stated goal—Soviet withdrawal—but were unaware they were creating a time bomb in Afghanistan. Ambassador Matlock believes that if Gorbachev had agreed to withdraw earlier, as early as the Geneva summit, "he almost certainly could have secured from the United States what he sought in 1988: termination of arms supplies to the Afghan opposition."⁸ Whether or not that was possible in 1985–86, the Soviets were still striving for it in early 1988.

The strategic arms discussion in the period before the Moscow summit was vigorous but made little progress on the remaining issues with START—primarily verification and the linkage between START and SDI. At the first meeting with Shultz in February, Gorbachev tried to argue again for a strong commitment to observe the original provisions of the ABM Treaty of 1972, which the Reagan administration had controversially reinterpreted on multiple occasions (so as to allow development of SDI), and resisted embracing even now. Given Soviet fears of SDI as a potential first-strike tool, Moscow pressed for limits on missile defense side-by-side with any negotiated limits on the missiles themselves. During both of Shultz's visits, Gorbachev tried to persuade him to cement the original understanding of the ABM Treaty as a stepping stone to real progress on strategic

⁷ Document No. 55.

⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 288.

arms reductions. Gorbachev sought to address security concerns but also to pacify the Soviet military establishment, which was still reeling from its forced submission to unequal reductions in the INF Treaty. The general secretary was now becoming very sensitive to domestic politics in his own country; however, this argument did not carry much weight with Shultz.

A gradual understanding that START might not be possible by the time of the Moscow summit was emerging over the four ministerials. The first Shultz visit to Moscow featured a rather optimistic discussion about strategic arms cuts, lots of jovial moments in the talks, and general bonhomie. On February 25, in his report to the Politburo about Shultz's visit, Gorbachev was upbeat and optimistic. He saw a window of opportunity for arms control "because politically we have entered a new situation in our relationship with the United States." He directly linked the success of *perestroika* to deep reductions in military spending while keeping basic parity with the United States. He spoke strongly about the need to revise the Soviet military budget to rein in defense spending and confirmed his priority as finalizing START while Reagan was still in office.⁹ However, by Shultz's second visit to Moscow, at the end of April, the discussions on strategic weapons had lost their optimistic luster. The two stumbling points were SDI and verification.

On verification, the tables had turned. Ever since the Soviets announced their new approach to arms control verification in March 1987 within the framework of negotiations of the INF Treaty, they had continued to push for on-site inspections of land-, sea- and air-based facilities—to the consternation of their U.S. colleagues, who had proposed intrusive on-site verification only because they were sure the Soviets would never accept it. But now, it was the U.S. military that was balking, and Shultz tried to explain to Gorbachev that the U.S. Navy would not agree to shipboard inspections; therefore, it would be hard to establish a verification procedure for SLCMs. This issue came up very vividly during Shultz's February trip to Moscow, where he sat face-to-face with Marshal Akhromeyev. Akhromeyev spoke about the resistance of the Soviet "missile people" to on-site verification, which they had to overcome. He said that "the Soviet side had broken their land-based people, but the U.S. side could not break its sea-based people." He certainly had in mind resistance not only to verification but to the INF Treaty and the inclusion of Oka missiles, which he had just experienced the previous year. When Gorbachev accused Shultz of being "scared of verification," the secretary of state responded that "he did not know how Gorbachev's navy was, but to ours the idea of people tramping around inside nuclear submarines was not attractive."¹⁰ Thus, U.S. military's recalcitrance on the very issue that previously had been an American strong suit ("trust, but verify," Reagan kept repeating) held up the arms cuts that Moscow—more so than Washington—was ready to make.

⁹ Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, pp. 290–292.

¹⁰ Document No. 55.

Another important issue that came to occupy a central place in U.S.-Soviet discussions and in Soviet internal debates in 1988 was that of conventional weapons, specifically, Warsaw Pact superiority in Europe. The U.S. side repeatedly pointed to the latter fact as a reason for the lack of progress on START. Now Gorbachev was ready to tackle the issue domestically—and on March 10 he raised it at the Politburo. He mentioned specifically the large congressional delegation that was in Moscow at the time, including Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Sam Nunn. Gorbachev for the first time at the Politburo raised the idea of publishing real data on Warsaw Pact forces and requested that studies be done on cuts in conventional forces without delay. He thus signaled to his political and military leadership that he was ready to put his cards on the table.¹¹

Gorbachev also spoke about conventional weapons and the new defensive military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact extensively in his meeting with the U.S. congressmen, suggesting the need for the “fastest” decision possible on a mandate for the start of negotiations in Vienna. In response to Senator Nunn’s strong statement on conventional weapons, Gorbachev admitted that there were indeed “asymmetries” in Europe but offered to sit down at the negotiating table and bargain instead of throwing around accusations.¹² This moment represented a turning point in the Soviet position on conventional weapons. Soviet initiatives produced in 1988 did not elicit much response from the U.S. side; progress finally occurred only after Gorbachev’s December 1988 announcement of major unilateral cuts. Negotiations in Vienna would finally start in March 1989 and culminate in the signing of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty in November 1990 in Paris.

Meanwhile, preparations for the summit included a significant expansion of contacts between military and foreign ministry staffs at several levels. Perhaps the most important of these was the meeting on March 16–17, 1988, between defense ministers Frank Carlucci and Dmitri Yazov. In a spirit of partnership and confidence-building, they discussed a wide variety of issues, including the new military doctrine and conventional force reductions.¹³ This meeting, like the Shevardnadze-Shultz sessions, did not produce tangible outcomes on conventional forces, but it did contribute somewhat to the process of removing Cold War stereotypes among the military of both countries—the generals were learning to discuss specific issues and take each other’s concerns into account, which later made it easier to resolve difficult issues.

By late April, it became clear to both sides the START Treaty would not be ready for signature at the summit, and most likely not before the end of the Reagan administration. In his conversation with Shultz on April 21, Shevardnadze pressed hard for progress, but Shultz responded that still-unresolved issues like SLCMs

¹¹ Document No. 57.

¹² Gorbachev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 9, pp. 462–63.

¹³ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 342.

would not “reach full closure during the next month,” so agreement was unlikely for the summit.¹⁴ Arguments over these nuclear-armed cruise missiles, pushed by the parochial interests of the U.S. Navy rather than a broader consideration of the national interest, would continue to delay a treaty. But by 1991 their lack of strategic value would lead to President George H.W. Bush’s unilateral decision to withdraw all tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. ships. Publicly, Gorbachev still insisted on developing and signing a “good” treaty with Reagan, but he no longer pressed for a specific date. Although signing START at the Moscow summit had been Shultz’s top priority, he found himself bogged down in a struggle for INF ratification in Washington he did not anticipate. In his memoir, Shultz suggests that this process and the Senate debate over INF were among the main obstacles to any progress on START. However, as Frances FitzGerald has shown, the real barrier was resistance from the Pentagon, led by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Carlucchi.¹⁵ The irony here is that the Soviet side hoped that by allowing and encouraging so much interaction between U.S. and Soviet military officials, they would enable the generals to transcend traditional barriers and achieve quick progress. Although nice words were said and toasts were raised, progress remained elusive. Of the main three Soviet priorities—ABM limits, verification, and conventional reductions—none was close to an agreement by the time of the summit.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev had experienced his first serious domestic crisis relating to *perestroika*. On March 13, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, an organ of the Russian Communist Party, published a letter from a Leningrad teacher named Nina Andreyeva entitled “I Cannot Give Up Principles.”¹⁶ The letter, printed while Gorbachev was away from the capital, became a manifesto for conservative forces, criticizing *perestroika* and defending traditional Soviet ideals and even Stalin. With Politburo member Yegor Ligachev as its powerful backer, the letter quickly circulated among Party cadres. It took some time for Gorbachev to rally his forces and strongly condemn the letter, first at the Politburo and then publicly in *Pravda* on April 5. He managed to blunt the fledgling conservative opposition in this first round of public challenge, but it was a sobering glimpse of the reality that the country was becoming tired of reform slogans, that old ideas were dying slowly, and that he needed to produce concrete results to shore up popular confidence in his reforms. If the summit could not produce arms control results, at least it could produce a useful show of new superpower unity and cooperation, which in turn would likely play well at home.

For the reformers around Gorbachev, domestic politics at the time were more important than the summit—specifically, preparations for the 19th Party Conference scheduled to begin at the very end of June. The first discussion of the

¹⁴ Memcon Shultz-Shevardnadze, April 21, 1988, U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA in 1997 by the National Security Archive.

¹⁵ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 443.

¹⁶ For a succinct overview of the Nina Andreyeva affair and the conservative opposition, see Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 172–173.

full text of Gorbachev's presentation was scheduled for June 6, shortly after the summit. In this context, Reagan's visit was just an interlude before the most important development of the year. Gorbachev's advisers were planning a revolutionary leap towards extensive democratization of the country, including, most strikingly, multi-candidate elections to be held in 1989. The reformers worked for weeks in April and May to produce a set of remarkable "theses" that would set the terms for the Party Conference, and take the initiative in countrywide political discussions. According to Archie Brown, it was during these discussions with his advisers on all issues of political reform, that "Gorbachev's own position was further radicalized."¹⁷ This was reflected in the theses. Published in *Pravda* at the end of May, the theses caught the attention not only of Party members across the USSR, but also of U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock, who had joined Reagan in Helsinki where the president had stopped on his way to the summit to recover from jet lag, and receive briefings. Matlock, astonished, concluded that "Gorbachev was finally prepared to cross the Rubicon and discard ... Marxist ideology" and that it was a "program that Ronald Reagan, in clear conscience, could endorse." Matlock emphasized the new Party theses in his briefing for Reagan, arguing presciently that "the Soviet Union will never be the same"—a sentiment the president would echo only a few days later.¹⁸

For Reagan, in the absence of a START Treaty to sign and with an impasse in both strategic and conventional arms negotiations, there was still a very important theme to discuss with the Soviets—the number one item on his four-point agenda—human rights. In National Security Decision Directive 305 outlining his goals for the summit, the first specific priority was stated as follows: "to stress the importance of progress in Soviet human rights performance across the board—an increased rate of emigration, family reunification, release of prisoners of conscience, and especially, changes in laws and practices that will produce greater respect for individual liberties."¹⁹ In terms of human rights progress and cooperation between the State Department and Foreign Ministry, 1988 would be a very productive year. Reagan himself and members of his administration were granted unprecedented access to dissidents and *refuseniks*, both during the summit and before it. Human rights and liberalization of the Soviet system were among Gorbachev's top priorities, too. The Soviets had made a proposal at the opening of the Vienna CSCE conference that a conference on humanitarian issues be held in Moscow. The West was skeptical, but Gorbachev was willing to make significant changes in order to persuade his counterparts and ensure that the conference was held up as an affirmation of success of his *perestroika*.

Human rights were clearly very important to Reagan and Shultz personally and they wanted to see the Soviet Union make real progress, especially regarding

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 175.

¹⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 296.

¹⁹ NSDD 305, "Objectives at the Moscow Summit," Ronald Reagan Library.

the lists of individuals they always brought with them to their meetings with Soviet leaders. When Shultz was in Moscow in February, he was allowed to visit academician Andrei Sakharov at his home. Interestingly, Matlock noted that “Sakharov’s views on human rights and arms control only partially coincided with U.S. official views.”²⁰ Shultz remembers that Sakharov asked the Americans to press Gorbachev for a withdrawal from Afghanistan and release of all political prisoners (Sakharov’s estimate of the number was “significantly lower” than Shultz’s). If that happened, Sakharov would fully endorse holding the humanitarian conference in Moscow. He did not worry as much about individual cases, thinking that the emphasis should be on changing Soviet laws and practices, and then individuals would not want to emigrate. In his memoir, Shultz recounts that “Sakharov replied that the United States should insist that the Soviet Union first withdraws from Afghanistan and release remaining political prisoners, but if it did that, the conference Shevardnadze had proposed would be most helpful to the human rights movement in the USSR ... and therefore should not be delayed until Soviet performance met Western standards.”²¹

Human rights issues came up in every one of the four ministerial meetings in spring 1988; they were also extensively discussed by the U.S. assistant secretary of state for human rights, Richard Schifter, with his counterpart, the new head of the Soviet desk on humanitarian issues in the Foreign Ministry, Anatoly Adamishin.²² Practically all requests related to humanitarian contacts and meetings with individuals that the U.S. side made in advance of the Moscow summit were granted. One could say this summit was the most comprehensive ever on human rights, which could not but make Reagan very happy. His extensive, minute-by-minute agenda prepared by the State Department included an unprecedented number of human contacts: the Spaso House dinner with dissidents, lunch at the Writers’ House, the address to students at Moscow State University, the visit to the Danilov Monastery, and of course the strolls on the Arbat and in Red Square.²³ To meet common people, to connect with Russians, was also a Reagan goal, which the administration tried to impress on their Soviet counterparts. In late April, Reagan’s national security adviser, Colin Powell, had a meeting with new Soviet ambassador, Yuri Dubinin, to outline to him Reagan’s goals and expectations. Underlining the largely ceremonial nature of the visit, Powell said Reagan “was coming to Moscow to learn about the Soviet Union and about its people,” not expecting to resolve any difficult issues. When Dubinin brought up sea-launched cruise missiles, Powell dismissed it as too complicated,

²⁰ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 291

²¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1095.

²² An extensive record of these interactions is in Adamishin and Schifter, *Human Rights, Perestroika and the End of the Cold War*.

²³ President’s Annotated Agenda for the Moscow Summit, Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-025/3 by the National Security Archive.

and on topics from ABM to Central America, the two officials simply agreed to disagree.²⁴

Moscow greeted Ronald and Nancy Reagan with hot and humid weather, very unusual for that time of year (even in the swamp of Washington). May 30 broke heat records going back decades. Muscovites were eager to meet the person who had called their country an “evil empire,” and whom the Soviet press used to portray as a warmongering monster until their own leader radically reversed the rhetoric and began touting the prospect of abolishing all nuclear weapons together with his erstwhile adversary. Traditional views and ideological thinking were not easy to erase from people’s minds, but at the very least they were extremely curious to see Reagan in person.

The first one-on-one meeting between the two leaders took place shortly after 3 p.m. on May 29 in St. Catherine’s Hall in the Kremlin. The first thing Gorbachev did was to walk Reagan back to their first summit, in Geneva, and praise the statement they had made together that nuclear war could not be won and should never be fought. Now he wanted Reagan to join him in a similar statement ruling out the use of force in international disputes. In addition, the two leaders would pledge to respect “non-interference in internal affairs and freedom of socio-political choice” as “mandatory standards of international relations.” The short paragraph the Soviet side had crafted also contained the phrase “peaceful coexistence,” which was a red flag for the American advisers, but not for Reagan. After reviewing the written draft, the president responded, “I like it,” and the two leaders agreed to give it to their aides.²⁵ The statement met immediate resistance from Carlucci, Shultz and Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, because to their ears it sounded like the *détente* of the Nixon-Kissinger era against which Reagan had campaigned. That kind of language, of course, could also undermine administration support for “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan or elsewhere around the world. The first meeting also included a discussion of human rights (Gorbachev proposed the two sides convene an ongoing seminar on the subject), emigration and freedom of religion, even the possibility of a joint mission to Mars. Amazingly, not a single word was spoken about the START Treaty or arms control in general.

That would change at the first plenary session on May 30, which was wall-to-wall arms control. After discussing their shared goal of dramatic cuts in strategic weapons, both leaders implicitly admitted that START was nowhere near ready to sign, and probably would not be signed under the present U.S. administration. Gorbachev then tried to make a breakthrough on conventional weapons

²⁴ Memorandum of conversation between Colin Powell and Yuri Dubinin, April 29, 1988, Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.

²⁵ Document No. 58.

in Europe, something he had already discussed at a Politburo session on March 10.²⁶ He presented the standard three-stage proposal designed to address U.S. concerns about Soviet superiority in conventional arms in the European theater, and to move beyond those concerns to deep mutual reductions. In the first stage, all imbalances would be removed by way of withdrawals and thorough on-site inspections. In the second stage, each side would reduce conventional forces by 500,000 troops overall. And in the third stage, “the remaining forces [would be given] a defensive character incompatible with the conduct of offensive operations.” At any stage, the Soviet side would be ready to discuss reductions of tactical nuclear weapons, one of Gorbachev’s favorite goals in Europe (though strongly opposed by Margaret Thatcher).²⁷

Reagan seemed not to notice that the Soviets were addressing the one major objection his own military and security aides had come up with to his dream of abolishing nuclear weapons—the imbalance in conventional forces in Europe.²⁸ And the secretary of state simply ducked the issue. Shultz basically refused to discuss anything relating to conventional arms, suggesting the leaders punt the issue to the negotiators in Vienna. He justified this by invoking the necessity of “marketing [the proposal] to our respective allies,” because “most weaponry being discussed did not belong to the US.”²⁹ However, Gorbachev already had approval from the Warsaw Pact leaders for the 500,000 mutual troop reductions—it was the West that was not ready for the arms race in reverse. Shultz called for caution and did not even agree to include a statement on conventional arms in the final communiqué. Interestingly, although Gorbachev saw the U.S. refusal to negotiate on conventional weapons as a major missed opportunity of the summit and devoted extensive space to discussion of it in his memoir,³⁰ Shultz did not even mention it in his memoir account of the Moscow summit.

Another important and somewhat tense discussion took place on verification issues related to strategic arms negotiations and chemical weapons. After the Soviet side essentially admitted the Krasnoyarsk radar was a violation of the ABM Treaty, Gorbachev stated that construction there had already ceased and that the Soviets had already offered to dismantle the radar. However, he continued, the barrier to verification was now on the U.S. side—“the problem here was resistance on the part of the US leadership and US Navy. The President had earlier been a strong advocate of verification. Now the Soviet side had to talk the US into it. Was the earlier position a bluff?”³¹ But there was not much response from the Americans when the Soviets proposed to establish a comprehensive verifica-

²⁶ Document No. 57.

²⁷ Document No. 60.

²⁸ Document No. 36.

²⁹ Document No. 60.

³⁰ Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 2, p. 126, in post-summit press conference, June 1, *Pravda*, June 2, 1988.

³¹ Document No. 60.

tion regime as part of the strategic and chemical arms treaties, nor when they promised that “Moscow would be very stringent on verification issues.”

Although no serious progress was achieved on arms control, Reagan and Gorbachev were able to exchange instruments of ratification of the INF Treaty, which the U.S. Senate had ratified just as the president was flying to Russia. It was a symbolic public presentation that brought the treaty into force and emphasized to the public that this significant achievement was the result of their leaders’ efforts to overcome mistrust and normalize relations between the two countries. In this sense—overcoming mistrust—the summit was a clear success. For Reagan, it was his turn, as Gorbachev had done in Washington during the December 1987 summit, to charm Muscovites and to gain his own first-hand impressions of the Russian people. From the first unplanned walk on the Arbat to the last press conference, the summit became a major public relations event, breaking some of the prior ideological stereotypes and promoting Reagan’s agenda of human rights.

Babushkas, students, monks and opposition figures all got to see Reagan for themselves. During his visit to the Danilov Monastery on May 30, hosted by Metropolitan Filaret, he spoke to the monks, even mentioning the Ukrainian Catholic Church, repressed by Stalin and, among other things, a center of nationalist sentiment in Ukraine that would play an important role later in 1991. Reagan pressed for the Uniate Church to be rehabilitated and allowed to function freely. At the time, the newly active Russian Orthodox Church was trying to keep its competitor in Ukraine from enjoying the fruits of new *glasnost* and religious opening.

Later in the day, the Reagans hosted a reception at the U.S. ambassador’s residence, Spaso House, for 42 prominent dissidents and *refuseniks*, among whom were Moscow biologist and editor of the famed periodical *Chronicle of Current Events*, Sergey Kovalev, who served seven years in the Perm-36 camp for political prisoners; Father Gleb Yakunin, the Orthodox priest and human rights activist; and Yuliy Kosharovskiy, a Jewish *refusenik* of seventeen years. These “democratic activists,” as Ambassador Matlock preferred to call them, came from several republics of the USSR, including the Baltics, along with their families. Matlock describes the warm feeling at the event, where many “guests brought their children, including some who were quite small, several of whom wandered among the tables during the speeches.”³²

The highlight of the trip, and the meeting that carried the most resonance in the press—and the best speech, too—came with Reagan’s address to students at Moscow State University on May 31. Standing in front of a huge bust of Lenin, Reagan gave an oration that might have been a commencement address at any American university, except that it was at the most prestigious Soviet institution of higher learning. The president spoke about capitalism and democracy, human rights and the importance of learning, with an ease and eloquence that

³² Document No. 61.

surprised the students, impressing them not as an ideological warmonger, but as a gracious and charming elder statesman, who could also handle questions from the audience. Matlock remembers that the “prolonged standing ovation [Reagan] received was probably the most enthusiastic he had witnessed since the demonstration that followed his nomination at the Republican convention.”³³ For those students in attendance, the Cold War ended on May 31, 1988. Reagan called the experience “an extraordinary day I never thought possible.”³⁴

Meanwhile, the surreal sights of the summit piled up, with the U.S. president chatting with the Soviet general secretary as if with an old friend, and hugging a wide-eyed little Russian boy. When a journalist queried him about the “evil empire” of early speeches, the president replied, “I was talking about another time, another era.” When asked directly who deserved the credit for the changes, Reagan responded, “Mr. Gorbachev deserves most of the credit, as the leader of this country.”³⁵ Back in Kennebunkport, where Reagan’s vice president and future successor was vacationing, perhaps fog obscured the view, because he, directly contradicting his president, sounded a note of caution to reporters: “The Cold War’s not over.”³⁶ The election season had begun.

The experience in Moscow deeply affected Reagan on a personal level, and it showed in his final press conference in the Soviet capital, where he spoke about the summit with excitement, as a high achievement and the beginning of a new era. He called Gorbachev his friend and did not harp on any shortcomings or missed opportunities during their meetings. Reagan continued to express this feeling of euphoria all the way back to Washington, including in a major speech at Guildhall in London. When he arrived in Washington he called the summit “momentous” and praised it for producing “real progress on human rights, on regional conflicts, on greater contacts between the people of the Soviet Union and the United States.”³⁷

Impressions were quite different for the Soviet side. During the last session, Gorbachev had once again tried to persuade Reagan to make a joint declaration on the non-use of force in international relations. Gorbachev presented a corrected draft, noted he found it hard to understand why the U.S. side was so adamantly against it, and appealed to Reagan on personal terms; but the president’s advisers called for a recess and took him aside. As Shultz noted in his memoir, “we persuaded the president that he should not accommodate Gorbachev.”³⁸ This clearly defined the limits of the new cooperative relationship, which fell far short of Gorbachev’s hopes. None of the main objectives that he hoped to achieve from

³³ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 302.

³⁴ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 713.

³⁵ Quoted by Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p. 457, remarked on by Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 302.

³⁶ Oberdorfer, *The Turn*, p. 329.

³⁷ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 459

³⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1105.

the summit materialized: START was not signed and was nowhere in sight; there was no progress on verification of SLCMs because of U.S. Navy resistance; the American side never even considered a breakthrough proposal on conventional weapons; and the least controversial point in his view—a mere joint statement on basic principles of the new world order—was rejected by the Reagan team even though the president seemed to have no objections to it. Frances FitzGerald quotes Jim Hoagland of *The Washington Post* as saying that all the diplomatic business of the summit “could have been accomplished by a couple of assistant secretaries of state in Geneva before lunch.”³⁹

The difference in the two sides’ assessments of the summit was evident in the official briefing document by the State Department (a detailed 19-page cable) for all posts to use “in briefing host government officials at suitably high level.” Referring to the Soviet attempt to obtain a statement against the use of military force, the cable reads: “we had to bring the Soviets back down to earth” and “we were not going back to the kind of vague concepts we had seen in the 1970s that were subject to differing interpretations and could result in misunderstandings and recriminations.”⁴⁰ But Gorbachev in his closing press conference would make clear that an American endorsement of his “new thinking” on security policy, and specifically a rejection of “military means” to solve problems, would have helped him in his efforts to restructure Soviet foreign policy, and put his own establishment more on the defensive, thus allowing him to make more reforms even more quickly. Gorbachev would express disappointment that “the opportunity to take a big stride in shaping civilized international relations has been missed.”⁴¹

This frustration came through clearly in the final press conference, where his remarks stood in contrast to Reagan’s high praise of the summit’s achievements.⁴² He called the dialogue “not an easy one” and spoke about major missed opportunities, such as the failure to discuss the conventional weapons approach and American rejection of the proposed joint statement. However, the main breakthrough of the summit, for Gorbachev, was the “human factor”—the Soviet “presence” in the American media round the clock for four days, the maximum exposure of the American public to “*perestroika*, and connected to it democratization, *glasnost*, openness.” This was, to Gorbachev, “the main phenomenon of the summit.”⁴³

In his post-summit report to the Politburo, Gorbachev mentioned the “human factor,” that the “ordinary American has seen an ordinary Russian,” but he did

³⁹ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 458.

⁴⁰ Department of State, Cable 180785, “Moscow Summit Briefing Materials,” June 8, 1988, released by Department of State under FOIA in 1996.

⁴¹ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 356.

⁴² *Pravda*, June 2, 1988, p. 1.

⁴³ Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy*, vol. 2, p. 130.

not devote much time to the actual substance of the negotiations.⁴⁴ He had bigger things to worry about—the 19th Party Conference was coming in just a couple of weeks, at which he was planning to overturn essentially all the foundations of the Soviet political system. Anatoly Chernyaev, who would normally devote pages and pages of his diary to summit meetings, this time wrote only that they “took a break from Volynskoe-2 [where the advisers were preparing drafts for the party conference] due to the Reagan visit,” which underscores what the true Soviet priorities were at the time. Chernyaev did make note of Reagan’s statement that the “evil empire” was a thing of the past.⁴⁵

Thus the last full summit between Reagan and Gorbachev did not produce any major arms control agreements and made it clear to the Soviets that no breakthroughs would be possible before the end of the Reagan administration. Moreover, they understood that any real progress in arms control, both conventional and strategic, would require a bold new move—a concession on the Soviet part. In his comprehensive assessment of the summit, the head of the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies and Gorbachev adviser, Georgy Arbatov, suggested that if Gorbachev wanted to achieve progress with the new administration, now was the time to prepare a major unilateral proposal, such as a significant reduction in tanks, which would impress European public opinion.⁴⁶ This would become the basis for the Soviet leader’s December 1988 U.N. speech and for his final official meeting with Reagan.

⁴⁴ Document No. 64.

⁴⁵ Chernyaev, “The Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev,” June 19, 1988. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB250/Chernyaev_Diary_1988.pdf.

⁴⁶ Document No. 65.

Document No. 55: Memorandum of Conversation,
Gorbachev–Shultz, Moscow

February 22, 1988

This dramatically candid conversation with Gorbachev includes not only senior State Department officials but National Security Adviser Colin Powell. The meeting takes place in an atmosphere of palpable good will following the INF Treaty signing and successful Washington summit, with ratification of the treaty looking more and more certain (compared to the opposition from establishment figures like Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft in fall 1987). Shultz is in Moscow for the first of a series of negotiations with Shevardnadze (February in Moscow, March in Washington, April in Moscow). When the Soviet leader raises “the hardest subject” of START, Shultz responds that “START was certainly possible, and the President was pushing in that direction,” but the rest of the conversation would reveal the real sticking points around verification that would delay the treaty for three more years.

As the two sides discuss ratification of the INF Treaty, Gorbachev comments on the Supreme Soviet’s approval: “for the first time the process was not as easy as before.” But Gorbachev’s biggest problem is American resistance to on-site inspections as part of START, especially for submarine-launched cruise missiles: “now you are afraid of verification,” Gorbachev nudges. Shultz responds that he “did not know how Gorbachev’s navy was, but to ours the idea of people tramping around inside nuclear submarines was not attractive.” Marshal Akhromeyev then intervenes to say the Soviet side “had broken their land-based people” on their resistance to on-site inspections, but “the U.S. side could not break its sea-based people. Perhaps that was because the Secretary was a Marine.”

Later Gorbachev laments that on chemical weapons, UK and U.S. enthusiasm “had cooled,” but the USSR still wanted a summit statement. When the meeting turns to Afghanistan, where the Soviet withdrawal would formally begin in May 1988 following U.N.-sponsored accords in April, Gorbachev remarks that the Afghanistan conversation in Washington (at the INF summit) “did not turn out well.” Gorbachev asks for cooperation from the United States to achieve a “neutral, non-aligned and independent” Afghanistan, and “invite[s] the U.S. side to get rid of its suspicious attitude” that “for 45 years” has produced policies “based on opposition.” Why not use “the next 40 or 50 years to build on the possibilities for cooperation”? After frank but cooperative reviews of the Iran-Iraq war and the Middle East peace process, the discussion draws to a warm close, including a few jokes: Shultz remarks “that he thought the military-industrial complex ran everything” in the USSR, but Gorbachev shoots back, “like in your country.”

Gorbachev welcomed the Secretary to Moscow. He said he was personally pleased to have him and his colleagues here. The two sides had good businesslike relations. He asked jokingly if relations [sic: elections] could not be postponed for three or four years so they could work in a quiet setting.

The Secretary noted that Gorbachev had already met the leading contenders for the U.S. Presidency. There would be important elements of continuity in U.S. policy. The reason was that President Reagan had worked with Gorbachev, they had gotten the two sides onto a different course, and that was popular in the U.S. It had been interesting to see how attitudes in the Senate had evolved over the INF Treaty. Senators who had thought the public would be skeptical had discovered that pushing this was not popular. There were now over 80 votes committed to support of the Treaty, and the number was rising. This broad support assured that there would be important continuity. President Reagan's contribution would have a lasting effect.

Gorbachev said he agreed with that analysis, but with one important addition. This situation resulted from more than just the good will of the leaders of the two countries. He thought there was a more substantial reason for it. Both countries were coming to understand that they could not continue the relationship as it had been. The whole world saw that. The Soviet Union and the U.S. should therefore consider how to improve, how to normalize their relations. There were thus important substantial reasons why continuity was the prospect. The two sides needed to rebuild their relations. With that he was agreed.

He had mentioned the President, *Gorbachev* said, but he thought in addition his associates, the Administration, were also becoming convinced, like the Soviets, that we have to seek good relations, consistently, persistently, without illusions. This was necessary for both countries. The postwar period had proved that nothing good could come from the arms race. Other ways were needed. The old ways had led to an impasse—with regard to security, with regard to resources, with regard to relations between the two powers. [...]

Turning to arms control, *the Secretary* reported that the sides had shared views concerning the INF Treaty. He had informed Shevardnadze that the ratification process was going well, that the Treaty had strong support, that he felt very confident. The U.S. side was organizing a group to administer implementation; we were preparing to go into business.

Gorbachev replied that there was full confidence in the Soviet leadership that the Treaty would be ratified in the Supreme Soviet, although for the first time the process was not as easy as before. They were being accused of having ceded too much for Soviet security. They had been trying to prove that equal security was assured, but were being asked how this could be when they had said it was assured before but had agreed to reductions four times as great as the U.S. There had been heated debate in the Foreign Affairs Commission. *Akhromeyev* said they were still fighting back. *Gorbachev* went on that there was still the general sentiment in the country that the Treaty would be ratified. Democratization was gaining. Everything was connected. *The Secretary* joked that he should tell Senator Helms to grab the Treaty before the Soviet Union changed its mind. ...]

[...] *The Secretary* said he knew *Gorbachev* did not want all the details, but he thought there were aspects of the U.S. INF debate that were educational as the sides looked ahead. *Gorbachev* said he could see Senator Nunn and his

Committee were putting on pressure. *The Secretary* said they were not doing so on this score. That was a debate between the Executive and the Legislative that was separate from this subject, and he thought the U.S. side had it in hand. In the end, he said, Senator Nunn and he could work together rather well. *Gorbachev* said the Soviet side also had the impression that the Senator was a very solid person. Not easy to work with, but solid. *The Secretary* said that was true. *Gorbachev* commented that it was always interesting to deal with that kind of partner. [...]

The Secretary said that he agreed, and that to come to grips with this, both sides needed more information on the other's forces. He and Shevardnadze had agreed the day before to instruct the Geneva negotiators to produce drafts of the two protocols and the Memorandum of Understanding in time for Shevardnadze to come to Washington, on March 22 or thereabouts. He had talked to Admiral Crowe and the other chiefs. They were doing a lot of agonizing. But they were ready. Shevardnadze had said Akhromeyev and his colleagues were in the same position. This was an important and serious matter.

Gorbachev said that since verification seemed the most difficult issue, perhaps it should receive priority attention now. Perhaps there should be a special group of experts—say scientists and military people—to single the thing out, not just as part of the general work.

Shevardnadze said he and the Secretary had particularly discussed ways to intensify this work, especially on SLCM's, but this could be expanded to other matters.

Gorbachev said the work should encompass production, inventories, deployment areas on land, at sea, under water. Of course the two sides would need reciprocal information on each other. Without it verification efforts could not be successful.

The Secretary said he agreed. The two sides would see to it that the Geneva delegations were equipped with experts who could work competently and effectively, so that by the time of the Washington meeting there could be results. It was a good thing to set deadlines for them.

Gorbachev said it was a matter of fundamental (*printsipialno*) importance that in this process of seeking solutions to all problems of strategic arms, including ABM, the sides proceed from the provisions of the Washington statement. He said this because the draft document proposed by the U.S. at Geneva reflected the U.S. approach to strategic stability. President Reagan had taken that approach in Washington too. He (*Gorbachev*) had made clear from the outset that this was not the way to a solution. Together they had managed to find acceptable language on the subject. But if that were changed there would be no solutions. As was said here, one had to build a bridge across rather than alongside a river. [...]

[...] *The Secretary* said he would like to go back to the strategic arms treaty, and make some more comments. Looking at the verification issues, they were all difficult, but those concerning mobiles were a special and more difficult problem, and those concerning SLCM's even more so. There had been special discussion of each issue in the meeting the day before. The U.S. side had had the position on

mobiles that they should be banned, basically because anything agreed to would be so difficult to verify. But both sides had been working on the verification issue. Part of the discussion had been conceptual, part of it explicit. The sides were not home free. But he was somewhat more confident than in times past.

Turning to SLCM's, the Secretary continued that Akhromeyev had spoken strongly on it in Washington. The U.S. side had examined the suggestion the Soviet side had made. It was still at a loss to see how it could be confident about verification. But the U.S. side was prepared to keep working. It also agreed that there were certain things that could be done: at a minimum this was an area that had to be treated; there should be a limit to nuclear-armed SLCM's; the U.S. side would be willing at the right time to set a number we would be prepared to live with; we would like to have it verifiable. The U.S. side did not see how that could be accomplished. But it did see that a limit was necessary, and was prepared to step up to the issue. [...]

The Secretary had spoken about SLCM's, *Gorbachev* went on. The Soviet side did believe, as it had said in Washington, that this was a fundamental problem. If no solution were found it would devalue all the efforts of the two sides on START and ABM. It would make them pointless. He would use the fashionable word "compensation." SLCM's could be the start of a new arms race. He understood that the U.S. position was to agree there should be a specific limit on SLCM's, but to doubt that it could be verified. But if the U.S. agreed to the concept of comprehensive verification, including national technical means, inspections, and limits on types of ships and submarines on which they were deployed, then the task of assuring effective verification could be accomplished. If two elements were combined—verification with the obligation of both sides to abide by and not violate the agreement, and access to production facilities, ships and submarines—then the problem could be resolved. If there were no such access this could be more difficult. Systems could be configured—with lead packaging, shielding—to make it more difficult. But that would not be good for an agreement. It would be deception.

To sum up, *Gorbachev* said, he saw good possibilities of moving forward, and doing so faster. Solutions were possible.

The Secretary said he welcomed *Gorbachev's* comments that he saw things moving forward. He was uncertain about all the subtleties and complications. But he could see important strides in what *Gorbachev* had said.

The Secretary said he would like to comment on two questions *Gorbachev* had raised.

Returning to SLCM's, The Secretary said that the on-site inspection, at least in certain cases, and identification of types of ships and submarines both give us problems. We would have to think hard on this issue. We were prepared to set a number and live with it, but we were not at all confident about verification. However, we would keep working.

Gorbachev said "now you are afraid of verification." Once the Soviet side has accepted a U.S. proposal, the U.S. side took it back. It was becoming almost a routine.

The Secretary said he did not know how Gorbachev's navy was, but to ours the idea of people tramping around inside nuclear submarines was not attractive. We would keep working on the issue. *Gorbachev* said the Soviet navy was positively enthusiastic about the idea. *Akhromeyev* said the Soviet side's missile people, the ICBM people, had resisted the idea of U.S. inspectors on their bases till the very end. But the Soviet Union had a government. The U.S. side also had people in power, but they did not seem to be able to break the resistance of the navy people. *Gorbachev* commented that there was after all a government (*vlast'*) in both the Soviet Union and the United States. *Akhromeyev* said the Soviet side had broken their land-based people, but the U.S. side could not break its sea-based people. Perhaps that was because the Secretary was a Marine. *Gorbachev* said he thought that was an old bias. *The Secretary* offered to turn the floor over to General Powell. [...]

What worried him, *Gorbachev* continued, was the U.S. position on chemical weapons. *Shevardnadze* said it was his impression that the Secretary of State was worried about it too. *The Secretary* asked if Gorbachev were worried that the U.S. side was pushing too hard to get the job done.

Gorbachev recalled that the U.S. draft convention submitted in 1984 had called for complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union had later decided to join this, and do so in a big way. This had not been an easy step. Then, suddenly, Mrs. Thatcher's enthusiasm had cooled. Then the Soviet side got information that this was as a result of a sign from Washington. Then the U.S. side's enthusiasm had cooled too. The Soviet side knew there was a dog buried somewhere, as the saying went. It did not know whether it was buried in the White House, in the State Department, or in the Pentagon. What would the Secretary say to a proposal to prepare by the time of the Summit a substantive statement on a chemical weapons ban which expressed the determination of both countries to complete the agreement?

The Secretary said he would favor it.

Gorbachev said that perhaps he should appreciate this statement of welcome, since the Secretary was always talking about the difficulties and complexities of chemical weapons production banning. Perhaps the U.S. and the Soviet Union should designate one chemical weapons production facility where the verification procedures that had been developed could be tried.

The Secretary said that was the first time he had heard of that idea. He did not have a response, but it was an interesting idea. In general there was nothing like actually doing something. The managers might see if they could fool the inspectors. It did not seem to him a bad idea. He would probably be criticized for saying that. [...]

The Secretary reported that he and *Shevardnadze* had spent all night on regional issues. He thought it was the most thorough discussion on them they had ever had. He could not say he felt there had been any particular outcome, but there had been a good exploration, a further maturation of the two sides' discussions. For instance, this was true on Angola and Cambodia, where there was possibly promising follow-up.

The Secretary said he would be interested in Gorbachev's reactions to the discussion on the Iran-Iraq war and on Afghanistan. He had told Shevardnadze that he welcomed Gorbachev's statement on Afghanistan, which presented some perspectives. We wanted Geneva to be the last round, to end the laborious process. As that happens people seek assurances, including the U.S. side, and he had tried to explain that in detail. He would welcome Gorbachev's views, including his views on the Middle East, to which, for better or worse, he was heading.

Gorbachev said the Secretary and Shevardnadze had found a good time, in the dark of night, to discuss somber issues.

Gorbachev said he would first like to make a general comment to help the two sides understand what role there was for efforts to resolve regional conflicts. The first thing he wished to say was that the Soviet Union and the U.S. should give the whole world an example of how to cooperate on these issues. If they did conflicts could be resolved. But it would be necessary to be less one-sided, to take account of the interests of all parties. *The Secretary* said he agreed with that.

Gorbachev continued that under any other approach conflicts could not be resolved. He was saying that because he could still see mistrust on the part of the Americans. The U.S. side did not trust the sincere Soviet desire to cooperate to help resolve very painful conflicts. Perhaps this resulted from the fact that it had been mistrusting the Soviet Union for a long time. Probably this resulted from the NSC attitude. According to information he had received, at the NSC there was still the attitude that the Soviet Union was today and would be tomorrow a country with which the U.S. would clash. If that was the approach it would be hard to get solutions.

The fact that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were present everywhere in the world could however be interpreted very differently, *Gorbachev* went on. As he had said to the Secretary and also said publicly, he had drawn the conclusion that we were in a sense locked together, and should cooperate. He thought that this approach made it possible to find solutions to problems. It was a conceptual approach, but it was valid for finding solutions.

Let us see how it works with regard to Afghanistan, *Gorbachev* continued. He had brought to Washington and conveyed first to the American side the Soviet plan of action. He had asked for American cooperation to resolve this very painful problem. The Soviet side had also taken into account the American side's suggestion that it was necessary to complete the Geneva agreements without waiting for the formation of a coalition government, without linking these two things. The U.S. side had said that a coalition government could not be created with bayonets; the Soviet side had agreed.

The conversation in Washington on that matter did not turn out well, *Gorbachev* went on. The Soviet side had believed that the situation around Afghanistan was one on which the two countries could cooperate, could give an example of to approach such conflicts. In order to push the U.S. side he had made his statement. Now the U.S. side had begun to move. [...]

Gorbachev said he wished to reiterate that in Afghanistan the Soviet Union had no intention of creating a bridgehead, or a base, or a road to warm seas. That was nonsense. It had never had such plans, and did not now. He could assure the Secretary of that. So he had one request, one thing to communicate. He requested the U.S. side to work to facilitate the early signing of the Geneva agreements, and to work on implementation of them to make Afghanistan neutral, non-aligned and independent. Both sides should work on that. The best thing would be for implementation to be bloodless. [...]

The Secretary suggested that they go on to Iran-Iraq.

Gorbachev asked the Secretary to tell the President he hoped the two countries would be able to cooperate on resolution of the Afghan problem.

On the Iran-Iraq problem, *Gorbachev* said, the Soviet side had been making efforts to see ways to resolve the problem. It had seen some new elements of cooperation emerging between our two countries, both bilaterally and in the Security Council, and welcomed that. It believed this was important both for the specifics of the problem and for future prospects in the Security Council, and valued this. It thought this should not fade away. It was ready to cooperate in the next stage as well.

At the same time, *Gorbachev* went on, it seemed to the Soviet side that differences were emerging in the Security Council, also between other members. The Soviet side had not failed during its Presidency; it was up to the U.S. side to be successful during its Presidency. The Soviet side would see what it could do to help.

The Secretary said he had spoken the day before about a little different approach. There had been no agreement on it, but it was somewhat different. The U.S. side had been thinking of a second or follow-up resolution that would have three components instead of just one:

- As now, a mandatory arms embargo against the noncompliant country, Iran. There were also two new ideas:
- An effective date would be set at some time in the future, 30 days or so. Thirty days might not be right, but we were thinking of some date, perhaps thirty.
- We would ask the Secretary General to form a special negotiating group, or name a special emissary, in any case some such device, which would focus the full attention of someone other than the Secretary General on the issue, seeing that he has so many other duties. This negotiating element would be new. The negotiator would have a date to work against. We would know that he could come back to the Security Council before the date if he chose. He could say that he was making headway on this or that aspect, and the date could be postponed if he chose. He would have that tool. This idea came out of the discussions of the day before. [...]

Gorbachev asked if the U.S. had considered the possibility of some step to reduce its presence in the Gulf, or did it fear that such a step would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. He thought the task the U.S. side had set for itself could be accomplished with fewer warships.

The Secretary said the task the U.S. set for itself had remained constant, and had been successfully accomplished. The U.S. side had recently reduced two capital ships and reconfigured its force to reflect the changing situation. What had changed was not the task but our estimate of what was needed to accomplish it. The U.S. side had no desire to keep its presence at anything like the present scale. It would like to reduce that presence. He asked Admiral [sic] Powell to comment.

General Powell said Shevardnadze had raised this issue, and this had given him the occasion to point out that only two additional combattant [sic] ships had figured in our buildup over the previous eight months. Most of the force consisted of minesweepers and carriers that constituted no offensive threat. They were intended to face the mine operations threat we were most concerned about. We now knew that threat better, and that was why the previous week we had announced our adjustment. We hoped to go further as the threat was reduced, and as we understood the threat better.

Gorbachev joked that the Iran-Iraq war continued, but for the time being our discussion of it had ended. The two sides had agreed they should continue to consult. The Iranian problem was also present in the Afghanistan problem, he remarked. It had to be carefully weighed. *The Secretary* commented that it was also present in the Middle East problem, as they had discussed the previous night. *Gorbachev* said that was correct. It seemed that the Iranians wanted fundamentalists to prevail in forming the government in Afghanistan, and not only there. *The Secretary* said they were probably willing to take over the Kremlin, and joked "Welcome to Washington." *Gorbachev* replied that he did not really think they could take over either the Kremlin or Washington, though they might be praying for that.

Turning to the Middle East, *Gorbachev* said the Soviet side had examined the new American suggestions, based on what it had received from Ambassador Matlock and communications from those Arabs with whom the American side had talked. He first of all welcomed the fact that there was some process—a weak one, but still a process—of cooperation, seeking to resolve this old international problem.

The Soviet side had waited for the U.S. side to reach the important conclusion that without Soviet participation the problem would be difficult to resolve. He believed he could find points of convergence in the efforts to resolve it. The Soviet side wanted a fair solution that took into account the interests of the Arabs, of Israel and of the Palestinians. It did not think that an approach which ignored the interests of any of the parties would work. He thought that was in a way the basis of the U.S. approach. There were perhaps some differences, but generally that seemed to be the way. One could not ignore the interests of any party. It was in that light that people looked at the proposals the U.S. side was now putting forward.

And the fact was, *Gorbachev* continued, that many people thought that despite the elements of flexibility the proposals seemed based on the old approach

of using the conference idea as a cover for separate agreements among a limited number of countries. For example, Syria was left out. There remained in the proposals a negative attitude toward the resolution of the Palestinian issue and toward the PLO. Everyone had noticed that.

Gorbachev continued that if, on the one hand, this was a proposal to seek a truce, to relax current tensions, to have the West Bank and Gaza issues linked to efforts for an overall settlement, people would understand. If not, it would be something quite different. The Soviet side had also proposed a preparatory meeting for a conference, that would permit both multilateral and bilateral efforts. People understood that. But if there were just to be talks to provide cover for separate deals of the Camp David type, people would know this and be against it. They knew that Camp David was dead. It would not lead to a useful end result. That was why so many had doubts. [...]

The Secretary said he would like to make a few comments.

He said that our sense was that procedures—both the international conference and bilateral procedures—had reached the point of sterility because they did not contain enough substance. The day before he had gotten the sense that the Soviet side agreed. So the approach the U.S. side had taken was to identify the general outlines of a settlement that might be accepted, and on that basis to try to get a chain of international and bilateral negotiations going. People might be ready to enter who were not ready now, because they could then feel more comfortable about the substance. That was the essence of the idea.

The Secretary continued that we now want to see all the issues of concern to people up on the table promptly, within the year, including things that could change the situation immediately, or at least over a short period, and things having to do with the so-called final status. He had to say that this notion was sharply different from the Camp David concept. We believed that the touchstone of the final status had to be Resolutions 242 and 338. [...]

Gorbachev said the Soviet side was ready for exchanges of views on this. It would try to make a constructive contribution. He invited the U.S. side to get rid of its suspicious attitude toward the Soviet Union and its policies in the Middle East. He believed the concept—that the U.S. had to have clashes with the Soviet Union in all latitudes and longitudes—should be abandoned. He believed the two countries should seek common approaches. For 45 years they had tried to build policies based on opposition. They should try for the next 40 or 50 years to build on the possibilities for cooperation. That would really change the world. [...]

Moreover, *Gorbachev* went on, perestroika was generalizing new forces, new people, in the political, economic, cultural spheres. An interesting point had been made to him by Indian Ambassador Kaul. He said he had been asking around Moscow what perestroika meant, and was getting confused. But then he went to provincial towns, where things were on their way, and then it was clear. Whereas in the West the information was that the Soviet leadership was split, that perestroika was threatened, that the military was unhappy and would one day slap the table. *The Secretary* said jovially that he thought the military-industrial complex

ran everything, that that was the explanation. *Gorbachev* said “like in your country.” [...]

Gorbachev said his visit to Washington had been an important event. It had generated many hopes in the Soviet Union and the world. It seemed that those who had been saying that if the U.S. and the Soviet Union could do something it would have a good impact were right. This impression was growing. The two sides should push on.

Gorbachev asked the Secretary to convey his regards to the President and all members of his cabinet. He was ready to reciprocate the great attention he had received in Washington. Of course the content of the visit would be very important. This was unavoidable. It meant work, work, and more work. The Secretary and Shevardnadze had begun working a 24-hour schedule. They would have to go over to a 48-hour schedule.

The Secretary said the President had asked him to give *Gorbachev* his regards, and to say he was looking forward to coming. He shared the view that the visit should accomplish as much substantive progress on all aspects of the relationship as possible. *Gorbachev* said he welcomed that, and shared the view.

The Secretary told *Akhromeyev* that he was serving as a mailman for Admiral Crowe, who had asked him to give *Akhromeyev* a letter if he saw him. *Akhromeyev* thanked the Secretary.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, Denis Ross Collection, Box 4.]

Document No. 56: Notes from a CC CPSU Politburo Session

February 25, 1988

Gorbachev informs the Politburo about his conversations with Secretary of State Shultz. The tone of the report is very upbeat and optimistic. At this point Gorbachev still strongly believes that it will be possible to prepare a START Treaty calling for 50 percent reductions in strategic nuclear weapons by the time of the Moscow summit and sign it while Reagan is still in office. In 1987, that hope of reaching a fast agreement on strategic weapons reductions drove many Soviet concessions in the INF negotiations, and the two leaders had agreed at the Washington summit in December of that year to move quickly to a START agreement. Gorbachev sees a window of opportunity for arms control "because politically we have entered a new situation in our relationship with the United States." The Soviet leader directly links the success of perestroika to deep reductions in military spending while keeping basic parity with the United States. He speaks strongly about the need to revise the Soviet military budget to rein in defense spending. Yet on this very day in Washington, Reagan tells editors of The Washington Post that time is too short to reach agreement on START by the time of the summit, in effect ratifying the go-slow views of his new national security team, most of whom (notably Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci and National Security Adviser Colin Powell) remained skeptical of Gorbachev's intentions, although not as hostile as departed hard-liners Caspar Weinberger and Richard Perle. Shultz was taken by surprise and dismayed at the shift, which undercut his efforts that Gorbachev is talking about here.

On the outcomes of Shultz's visit to the USSR

Gorbachev. We should lay the foundation for the SNF Agreement while Reagan is in office. He is also striving for this. He needs results from his visit to Moscow. Right now we have entered a level of relations with the United States at which we have not been for many years.

During the discussion of the relationship between the SNF and space, as well as SDI, somebody turned toward the idea that it is easy to find a solution in the military-technical sense, but from the political point of view we cannot come to an agreement. We had to remind this colleague that we are making policy here, that we will not get far with technocratic approaches. We all have to think politically, although of course we will not be able to do without a scientific military-technical analysis and prognosis. For example, what is SDI—is it a bluff, or a reality? An accurate answer will allow us to develop the only right policy. Right now this question is strongly tied to domestic policy as well.

Yes, we have achieved military-strategic parity with the United States. Nobody has calculated what it cost us, but we should have. Now it is clear that without a significant reduction in military spending we will not be able to solve the problems of *perestroika*. Parity is parity, and we should preserve it. But we also have

to disarm. Right now we have an opportunity to do so, because politically we have entered a new stage in our relationship with the United States.

We need to preserve a high dynamic in negotiations over disarmament questions. We have a vested interest in securing *perestroika* through foreign policy. Security will always be in first place for us. Pacifism is unacceptable. But the issue at hand is that we need to clearly realize the enormous significance of foreign policy for the success of *perestroika*.

In turn, *perestroika* and its success will change people's perception of the security issues and break down the stereotypes of reckless and oftentimes pointless spending on military needs. The security of our nation plus the living conditions of our people—this is the equation that we should constantly keep in mind.

We can argue, we can make mistakes, and we can even do some foolish things. But we will pull *perestroika* through if we do not lose the support of the people. We will even deal with such problems as Nagorno-Karabakh, which is nothing short of one of the ticking time bombs that were set in the preceding years.

The disarmament question connects two psychological factors. On the one hand, a secure peace (people still remember 1941!); on the other hand, people have already had a taste of *perestroika*, they've felt the breath of a new life and the perspective of prosperity. This is why the problem of adjusting military spending while maintaining security is the biggest problem. There cannot be any disregard or underestimation in this matter.

What have the recent years shown from the perspective of evaluating the possibility of adjusting military spending? We see, for example, that the West is not afraid of our bombs. This is not what scares them. They are scared by *perestroika*'s success. But if millions of people were afraid of bombs, only a small circle is afraid of *perestroika*. This is our chance, a colossal chance for our true intentions to be understood. I am not even mentioning the fact that in just under three years we have come a long way: we've learned a great deal, we've gotten used to many things, and understood the meaning of cooperation. Besides, we are not the only ones experiencing difficulties. They also have difficulties related to the arms race. They, too, are realistic. That is why they understand that they have to conduct affairs with the USSR in a new way.

Let's set a task to thoroughly analyze what it means to have a strong modern army, what it means to safeguard security, and what the qualitative aspect of security is. When we calculate all that, we will reduce all the rest. We need to economize and economize, and create a new budget for the 13th five-year-plan.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive*, published in Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., V Politburo TsK KPSS, pp. 290–292. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

Document No. 57: Notes from a CC CPSU Politburo Session

March 10, 1988

One of the topics on this extensive Politburo agenda deals with U.S.-Soviet relations and arms control in preparation for the Moscow summit between Gorbachev and Reagan. This would be Reagan's first trip to Moscow and there are still hopes of achieving a breakthrough START Treaty by the time of the summit. Gorbachev mentions Senators Sam Nunn and Carl Levin, among others, who "want to grab the initiative from our hands," and who were in Moscow at the time, as part of a large congressional delegation and were allowed to meet with dissidents and refuseniks. The Soviet leader somewhat disingenuously remarks that "the disarmament dialogue is shifting more and more toward the issues of reductions of armed forces and conventional arms in Europe," whereas in reality this issue is being raised more and more often in response to Gorbachev's nuclear initiatives because of Soviet conventional superiority. He is very sensitive to the issue but understands the need to confront it now. This is the first time the Soviet leader tells his Politburo they will have to publish real data on Warsaw Pact forces in Europe. Other requirements will be to undertake a major study of "various scenarios of the consequences for the army and defense industry," and to prepare the "cards" they will have to "put on the table." He admonishes them this study cannot be delayed. This is the first step toward the groundbreaking unilateral proposals he would make at the United Nations in December.

About meetings with American Senators and contacts between Yazov and Carlucci.

Gorbachev: [These meetings], as well as the NATO session in Brussels show that the center of the disarmament dialogue is shifting more and more toward the issues of reductions of armed forces and conventional arms in Europe. This is the result of the progress in the nuclear sphere and of our own initiatives regarding Europe.

Some of them (like Senator Nunn, Levin and people like them) want to grab the initiative from our hands. Others—led by Thatcher—want to show that we are only engaged in demagoguery and to affirm the necessity of "nuclear deterrence" in the minds. We are being accused of propaganda, [they] suggest the idea that we are satisfied with our "superiority" and don't want to change anything of substance.

We have already agreed to publish the data jointly with the Americans. But this is only half of the task.

We need to:

- prepare, seriously and comprehensively at the military-technical level, those "cards" that we asked to "put on the table."
- calculate various scenarios of the consequences: for the army and defense industry, for the economy as a whole (conversion), for the Warsaw Treaty

[Organization], for necessary “compensation,” so that the security of our country would not suffer and so on.

Do not stretch the deadlines for developing proposals and submitting them to the Central Committee.

If we don’t want to lose the dynamic and the trust for our initiatives, we must consider seriously the proposals that originate from various NATO circles, from social-democrats and certainly from the American Senators. This is not dilettantism on their part, but proposals worked through with experts, with scholars, and coming from people who realistically have a lot of influence in the process of disarmament.

For example, Nunn proposed to conduct a parallel study (in the USSR and in the USA) of the issue of preventing the unsanctioned use of nuclear weapons. And to exchange the results of the study afterwards, and even make them public. This idea deserves [our] attention. We should invite our science, our scientists to develop it.

In all seriousness—not just to find arguments for rejecting something, but to be able to use good ideas, i.e. to engage in a truly business-like dialogue with results.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2, Opis 2. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 58: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, First Private Session, Moscow, 3:26 p.m. – 4:37 p.m.

May 29, 1988

The memcons of the Reagan-Gorbachev summits provide an extraordinary and practically verbatim testament to the power of the “human factor” in diplomatic relations. This record of the opening discussion at the Moscow summit refers back to the original Geneva summit in 1985, when the two leaders signed a joint statement “that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” This was the maximum goal for the Soviet side coming in to Geneva, and Reagan was in complete agreement with it, to the Soviets’ surprise. Both leaders were convinced that if they could get in one room together, they would be able to find common ground and change history, and that’s the way it worked out.

Here, Gorbachev gives Reagan the text of a proposed new statement to the effect that “no problem in dispute can be resolved, nor should it be resolved, by military means” and that “equality of states, non-interference in internal affairs and freedom of socio-political choice” should be the “inalienable and mandatory standards of international relations.” Reagan indicates that he “likes” the statement, but once the leaders leave the “one-on-one” session, U.S. officials object strenuously, especially to phrases like “peaceful coexistence” and the implication that U.S. support for anti-communist insurgents like the Contras in Nicaragua (one of Reagan’s favorite causes) is illegitimate. For his part, Reagan presents his customary handful of cases of dissidents and refuseniks, and the two leaders proceed to an interesting discussion of religious freedom, including Reagan’s frank description of his own son, Ron, as “an atheist, though he called himself an agnostic.”

Gorbachev said he greeted the President warmly, and wanted to say right away that he was very determined to continue the growing dialogue which was gaining momentum in Soviet-American relations. They would be going into the details later, but he wished to say at the outset that he thought that in recent years, since the statement they had signed in Geneva, there was reason to see change for the better, and not only in bilateral relations, but, thanks to that, in the world. The most important result of the change was to make the whole international climate better and healthier.

Gorbachev went on to say that because neither side could have done it alone, the Soviet leadership could not have done it alone. The two sides had to do it together, and had. There was an important symbolism in that. The President’s personal contribution had counted for a lot. Gorbachev emphasized that he was not just saying nice words.

The President said that both sides had come a long way since he first wrote to Gorbachev in 1985. History would record the period positively, and that was true not just for our relations. As with the INF Accord, they had made the world a

little bit safer with some of the things they had done. *Gorbachev* said he agreed. *The President* continued that they still had much to do.

He was particularly pleased with what *Gorbachev* was doing in Afghanistan, that he was withdrawing his troops. Afghanistan was a problem *Gorbachev* had inherited; he had not been involved in its creation. The whole world approved the courage he was showing in what he was doing there.

Gorbachev said he would like to return to what he had said about their first meeting in Geneva. The President had mentioned it. It had been their first meeting; they would return to it again and again. It had been a difficult but necessary beginning. Looking back on Geneva, from the position achieved today, it was possible to give high marks to the important political statements that they had made there. There they had said in their joint statement that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought; that no war was admissible; that neither side sought military superiority. It had been a strong statement by the leaders of the two great powers, and it had received much attention in the world.

Gorbachev said he wanted to invite the President to build on that Geneva experience, to make in their joint document a political statement on the same scale. Both sides and their allies now thought it necessary to move forward in arms control. Joint efforts were needed. But it was also evident that no problems in the world could be solved by military means. War made things too unpredictable. Therefore, the only way to resolve problems, including regional conflicts, was by political means. Building on their four meetings since Geneva, they should say that, in this diverse world of varied ideologies and nations, it was essential to live together in peace. That should be a universal principle. He wanted to give the President his proposed language for a draft statement. He asked the President to think about how to reflect what they had thought about in their four meetings and would be thinking about here in Moscow.

Gorbachev asked the President what he would say in principle to making such a statement. It was a question of reflecting policies as they were.

The President asked if he could repeat it, and *Gorbachev* said he would pass it to him in writing. Noting that an English text was included, *the President* said he had thought for a minute *Gorbachev* thought he read Russian; no, said *Gorbachev*; the English text was there.

(The English text *Gorbachev* passed to the President in writing read:)

“Proceeding from their understanding of the realities that have taken shape in the world today, the two leaders believe that no problem in dispute can be resolved, nor should it be resolved, by military means. They regard peaceful coexistence as a universal principle of international relations. Equality of all states, non-interference in internal affairs and freedom of socio-political choice must be recognized as the inalienable and mandatory standards of international relations.”

After reading the statement, *the President* said he liked it, and their people should look at it. *Gorbachev* noted that he was passing it over for consideration and discussion.

The President said he was somewhat older than Gorbachev, and remembered when the two countries were allies in World War II against the evil of Hitler. Then, after the war, something happened between the countries, and, as Churchill said, an iron curtain fell between them. He did not hear the term used much anymore, and he thought that in their meetings he and Gorbachev had something to do with that. That did not mean that all the problems between the two countries were solved, but they had done things, and could do things, in the spirit of the statement that Gorbachev had just given him.

The President said he wished to digress for a minute and hand Gorbachev a list, as he had done on previous occasions. The United States was a country to which people came from all over the world, and many of them maintained an interest in the countries they had come from. All the cases on the list had been brought to his personal attention, by relatives and friends, and he wanted to mention two specifically.

The first was that of Yuriy Zieman. He was a writer. His children were in America, and he was seriously ill, and wished to come to America for medical treatment. *The President* said he had wanted to visit him. Zieman's children wanted to do something for him, if not to cure him, at least to ease his illness.

The President continued that he would not go through the whole list; there were a dozen or so. But for some reason he felt a particularly affinity to one man on the list, Abe Stolar. He was an American, whose parents had come to America in the time of the czars. He had been born on the very same day as the President, in the state of Illinois, so they had been born not many miles apart. When Stolar was young, he and his parents returned to Russia, and his son had eventually married a young lady in Russia. Now they had all decided they wanted to return to the land where Stolar was born, the United States, and the Soviet government gave permission to all but the daughter-in-law. So they all decided to stay behind until they could leave together. As Stolar put it, he wanted to die where he was born, and the President thought the Soviet authorities should allow the whole family to leave. He hoped he would not die on same day as Stolar, even though they were born on the same day.

Gorbachev responded that as always when the President presented specific humanitarian problems to him, especially concerning departures, these would be given careful attention. There was no obstacle to departure from the Soviet Union but one—possession of state secrets—and that was natural, since all countries wished to protect such secrets. But basically the Soviets did not keep people against their will.

Gorbachev went on to say that on the eve of his departure, in his statements in the U.S., in Washington, in Helsinki, the President had spoken about raising human rights in Moscow. *Gorbachev* said with a smile that he felt it was incumbent upon him to respond, since otherwise, people might feel the President had him (*Gorbachev*) in a corner, and that more pressure should be put on him. He wanted to say that they in the Soviet leadership were ready to work with the U.S., with the Administration and with the Congress, on an ongoing basis, for solutions to

humanitarian problems. He was saying that because he was convinced of it, and because it was quite clear that both in the Administration and in the Congress there were people who did not have a clear idea of what the human rights situation really was in the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev went on to say that the Soviets had many comments to make about the U.S. human rights situation; about problems of political rights, the rights of blacks and colored people, social and economic rights, the treatment of anti-war protesters and movements. They got many facts from the U.S. press. Probably they still did not know everything well. But they were ready to listen to what the U.S. side had to say. They were ready to have a conversation with the U.S. Congress. *Gorbachev* said he was calling for a seminar, on a continuous basis, involving officials, legislators and academics of the two sides, to discuss what was happening in the two countries.

It was not just a question of cases, *Gorbachev* continued, but of generalizations with which the Soviets disagreed; the U.S. probably heard some things it disagreed with on the Soviet side, too. But these things should be discussed. The Soviets were open to that kind of discussion.

The President said he knew what *Gorbachev* was saying. Some of it was true, as it was anyplace, because the U.S. was a big and varied country. It had many races, and one race, the blacks, had once been slaves. They were then freed, and discriminating against them was now illegal, but all the individual prejudices could not be immediately overcome. Some people in our country had brought them with them when they immigrated. But there was one difference: the U.S. had passed laws, and under the law no one could use prejudice to keep someone from getting a job, finding housing, getting an education, and the like. That would be against the law, and that person would be punished under the law, not because of his race or religion.

Gorbachev responded that there were many declarations and many provisions in the U.S. Constitution and U.S. laws. The problem was to look at how they were implemented in real life. If one looked at figures on unemployment of Blacks and Hispanics, on per capita income of Whites and Blacks, on access to education and health, there were big differences. In the Soviet Union, living standards were lower, even much lower than in the United States, but there was nothing like such large contrasts among groups of people in the country when it came to pay and the like.

The President responded that when slavery was lifted from the Blacks they started at a much lower level than others, and even the civil rights laws could not guarantee them equality when it came to jobs and schools, and the like. But when you considered that they had started lower, under the economic expansion of the past six years, wages and employment among Blacks were rising faster than for Whites. In other words, they were catching up.

Gorbachev said he had not been inventing figures. He was citing facts from the American Congress. He did not want to teach lessons to the United States President on how to run America. He just wanted to note that the President had

ideas about the Soviets, and the Soviets had ideas about the United States. Recently, the Soviets had become much more self-critical, but the U.S. had not. Once the Soviets had begun to be self-critical, it seemed that the U.S. spoke more about civil and ethical rights. Of course, the President was completing his term as President. *Gorbachev* said he thought the President's successors would be more self-critical than he was. Maybe everything was not "alright" (*Gorbachev* used the English word) in the United States, as the President's Administration seemed to think. He wanted only to say that he was suggesting an ongoing seminar between legislators and others to examine the issues and compare notes.

The President said he thought that was a wonderful idea. One goal of the session should be to work out misunderstandings.

The President continued that he wished to take up another topic that had been a kind of personal dream of his. He had been reluctant to raise it with *Gorbachev*, but he was going to do it now anyway. He wanted no hint that anything had been negotiated, where we had insisted on something the Soviets had to do. If word got out that this was even being discussed, the President would deny he had said anything about it.

The President went on that he was suggesting this because they were friends, and *Gorbachev* could do something of benefit not only to him but to the image of his country worldwide. The Soviet Union had a church—in a recent speech *Gorbachev* had liberalized some of its rules—the Orthodox Church. *The President* asked *Gorbachev* what if he ruled that religious freedom was part of the people's rights, that people of any religion—whether Islam with its mosque, the Jewish faith, Protestants or the Ukrainian church—could go to the church of their choice.

The President said that in the United States, under our Constitution, there was complete separation of church and state from each other. People had endured a long sea voyage to a primitive land to worship as they pleased. So what the President had suggested could go a long way to solving the Soviet emigration problem. Potential emigrants often wanted to go because of their limited ability to worship the God they believed in.

Gorbachev said that the Soviets judged the problem of religion in the Soviet Union as not a serious one. There were not big problems with freedom of worship. He, himself, had been baptized, but was not now a believer and that reflected a certain evolution of Soviet society. There was a difference of approach to that problem. The Soviets said that all were free to believe or not to believe in God. That was a person's freedom. The U.S. side was actively for freedom, but why did it then happen that non-believers in the U.S. sometimes felt suppressed. He asked why non-believers did not have the same rights as believers.

The President said they did. He had a son who was an atheist, though he called himself an agnostic.

Gorbachev asked again why atheists were criticized in the United States. This meant a certain infringement of their freedom. It meant there was a limitation on their freedom. He read the U.S. press. There should be free choice to believe or not to believe in God.

The President said that was also true for people in the United States. Religion could not be taught in a public school. When we said freedom, that meant the government had nothing to do with it. There were people who spent considerable money to build and maintain schools that were religious. He had heard Gorbachev had recently lifted restrictions on such contributions. There were people volunteering to restore churches. In our country the government could not prevent that, but could not help it either. Tax money could not be spent to help churches. It was true there were private schools, with the same courses as public schools but with religious education besides, because people were willing to pay to create and support them. But in public schools supported by taxes you could not even say a prayer.

Gorbachev said that after the Revolution there had been excesses in that sphere. As in any revolution, there had been certain excesses, and not only in that sphere but in others as well. But today the trend was precisely in the direction the President had mentioned. There had been some conflicts between the authorities and religious activists, but only when they were anti-Soviet, and there had been fewer such conflicts recently, and he was sure they would disappear. And when they spoke of perestroika, that meant change, a democratic expansion of democratic procedures, of rights, of making them real; and that referred to religion, too.

The President invited Gorbachev to look at religious rights under our Constitution. There were some people—not many, but some—who were against war. They were allowed to declare themselves conscientious objectors, when they could prove that it was a matter of faith with them not to take up arms even to defend their country. They could be put in uniform doing non-violent jobs—they could not escape from service—but they could not be made to kill against their religion. In every war there were a few such people, and sometimes they performed heroic deeds in the service of others. They could refuse to bear arms.

If Gorbachev could see his way clear to do what the President had asked, continued *the President*, he felt very strongly that he would be a hero, and that much of the feeling against his country would disappear like water in hot sun. If there was anyone in the room who said he had given such advice, he would say that person was lying, that he had never said it. This was not something to be negotiated, something someone should be told to do.

The President said he had a letter from the widow of a young World War II soldier. He was lying in a shell hole at midnight, awaiting an order to attack. He had never been a believer, because he had been told God did not exist. But as he looked up at the stars he voiced a prayer hoping that, if he died in battle, God would accept him. That piece of paper was found on the body of a young Russian soldier who was killed in that battle.

Gorbachev responded that he still felt the President did not have the full picture concerning freedom of religion in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had not only many nationalities and ethnic groups, but many religious denominations—Orthodox; Catholic, Muslim, various denominations of Protestants, like the Baptists—and they practiced their religion on a very large scale. The

President would meet the Patriarch, would go to one of the monasteries. If the President asked him, the Patriarch would tell him about the situation concerning religion in their country.

Gorbachev said he would like to make one more suggestion. It was true that they did not have much time to do much that was new. But they should try to work not just for the present but also for the future. Perhaps the President would give thought to opening up even greater cooperation in space between the two countries. If that came out of this meeting as a common desire, that would be a good result. The two countries had good capabilities and doing something jointly would be a very big thing. It was very difficult for one country to operate in space. As he had already said to *The Washington Post*, now the Soviets would like the U.S. to begin cooperation on a joint mission to Mars. He understood this would be a long-term project; it meant lots of work and could not be accomplished overnight. But it was important to begin, and cooperation would be very useful.

The President said that the U.S. program had been set back by the Challenger tragedy. But he had asked his people to look into the General Secretary's suggestion. Space was in the direction of heaven, but not as close to heaven as some other things they had been discussing. *Gorbachev* said it was at least closer to heaven.

The President noted that there was a young man giving him the signal that the wives of the two leaders were waiting. *Gorbachev* said he understood. *Gorbachev* said he wished to give the President his proposal for joint statement language on Mars. (Its English text read:)

"The two sides noted that preparation and implementation of a manned mission to Mars would be a major and promising bilateral Soviet-American program, which at subsequent stages could become international. It was agreed that experts from both countries would begin joint consideration of various aspects of such a program."

Gorbachev said he was very pleased with this first discussion. It confirmed that the two leaders were still on very friendly terms. He hoped this meant they were truly beginning to build trust between the two countries. He had told Secretary Shultz who must have conveyed it to the President—that they were just beginning to be on good terms with the Administration, and along came an election. But he still wanted movement; there was still time to accomplish many things.

The President said he agreed. He knew it was not protocol, but between the two of them they were Mikhail and Ron. *Gorbachev* said he had noticed they were on a first-name basis since the Washington meeting.

The President concluded that there was one thing he had long yearned to do for his atheist son. He wanted to serve his son the perfect gourmet dinner, to have him enjoy the meal, and then to ask him if he believed there was a cook. *The President* said he wondered how his son would answer. As the meeting ended, *Gorbachev* said that the only answer possible was "yes."

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 59: Memorandum of Conversation,
“The President’s Meeting with Monks in Danilov Monastery,”
Moscow, 2:28 p.m. – 2:47 p.m.

May 30, 1988

One major goal of the U.S. side at the Moscow summit is to engage with the Russian people, including as a priority the Russian Orthodox Church. But a planned meeting with the patriarch would fall victim to the Church’s insistence that Reagan not meet with activist priests such as the human rights hero Father Gleb Yakunin (present at a Spaso House reception later the same day). Instead, Reagan’s advance team arranges this visit to the Danilov Monastery hosted by a metropolitan of the Church (equivalent to a Catholic cardinal). Reagan’s prepared remarks mention the Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church as a way to push back at the Russian Orthodox Church’s desire to become an exclusive state religion. For her part, Nancy Reagan initiates an interesting dialogue about whether believers in Russia “would ever be free of the state.” In a revealing response, Metropolitan Filaret remarks: “It was hoped that, after the meetings between the President and the General Secretary, all such problems would go away.”

After the President delivered his prepared remarks, the press was asked to leave and an *unidentified monk* delivered a message of greeting to the President. He said that the monastery wished to greet the President on behalf of all members of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had traditions dating back a thousand years. He said that when the grace of the Holy Spirit acted in the hearts of people, the world would be saved from destruction. The President had come on a mission of peace, and if the Summit meeting advanced the cause of peace, Jesus Christ would be present. He concluded by asking God to bless the Summit and to fulfill the prayers of both Russian and American Christians that this mission of peace be successful.

Archimandrite Tichon then asked to say a few words about the members of the monastery. He said they included people of varied ages; he himself was 40 years old but some were older and some much younger. Some were still in religious schooling. He briefly introduced each of the monks present and their duties in the monastery.

Tichon went on to say that he had earlier served at a different monastery. But the year before, he had been appointed Abbot of Danilov Monastery. Restoration of this monastery had been underway since 1983, with the intention to complete as much of it as possible in time for the Millennium celebration of the Church. The restoration was financed by contributions from believers, both money and

precious objects which they donated for this purpose. The government was now returning other monasteries to the Church, and several had been returned just in the past year.

Tichon added that the monastery was grateful for the visit by the President and believed the President's mission would contribute to peace. He said that the problems which the President had mentioned in his prepared remarks were at present finding satisfactory solution. He concluded by saying that he prayed the President's talks with General Secretary Gorbachev would prove successful.

In response to *Tichon's* mention of his (*Tichon's*) age, *the President* quipped that if anyone was self-conscious about age, they should remember that he had celebrated his 39th birthday 38 times.

Tichon asked the President if he had any questions.

The First Lady responded that she would have a question. She said that, out of curiosity, she would like to know if those present believed that the Church in Russia would ever be free of the state.

Tichon responded that the Church was separate from the state under the constitution. Both Church and state had their own responsibilities: the Church to teach the faith, and the state to lead the political life of the country.

The First Lady asked if believers and non-believers in the Soviet Union would ever have equal opportunity for advancement in life.

Metropolitan Filaret said that this was what the Church hoped for. It was hoped that, after the meetings between the President and the General Secretary, all such problems would go away. *The First Lady* said she hoped so also.

The President said he had already discussed this subject with General Secretary Gorbachev. The United States was one nation under God, but church and state were totally separated. The government could not interfere in the affairs of churches in any way.

Filaret said it was the same in the Soviet Union by law, but the Church was trying to make sure that the law would be fully implemented.

The President said he hoped the Church would win. *Filaret* concluded the meeting by saying that Christ would win.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 60: Memorandum of Conversation, Reagan–Gorbachev, First Plenary Meeting, Moscow, 10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

May 30, 1988

At this session, the two leaders meet accompanied by their top officials. The almost 2-hour-long meeting centers around the two sides' negotiating talking points on arms control topics across the whole range of acronyms—START and ABM and ACLMs and SLCMs and ICBM sublimits, to name a few. Gorbachev makes another plea for a statement against the use of military force, but draws no response. At one point he raises again the Soviet view of missile defense, stating “amiably” that the president “was being deceived” about weapons in space as part of SDI—initially by former Defense Secretary Weinberger, but “perhaps Carlucci was now doing the same thing” with “Shultz’s help, ... moving the President in the wrong direction.” Gorbachev “wanted to state this in their presence so they could defend themselves.” Reagan intervenes, restating his long-standing arguments for missile defense, which in his view would be like a gas mask one would keep even after chemical weapons were banned, as a defense against an accident or a madman. But for Gorbachev, the problem with missile defense continues to be its possible use as a space-based platform for a first strike—the perennial Soviet security nightmare dating back to Hitler.

Gorbachev essentially admits the Krasnoyarsk radar is a treaty violation and offers again to dismantle it in the context of a larger ABM agreement. He then turns the tables on Reagan by bringing up American resistance to verification inspections of U.S. ships and factories, in contrast to Reagan’s favorite and frequently-repeated Russian proverb “trust but verify.” The most interesting part of the discussion concerns conventional forces in Europe, in which Gorbachev—presaging his December 1988 unilateral cuts—refers to Warsaw Pact-approved proposals for a 500,000-troop cut on both sides. The U.S. side demurs, with Shultz insisting such ideas “have to be marketed to our respective allies” first. Gorbachev admits the Soviets have the advantage in the Central European theater, but argues that NATO is superior on the southern flank, and claims the reason the U.S. is resisting exchanging full data on the military balance is because it would show “there was no superiority on the Soviet side.”

While photos were being taken, *General Secretary Gorbachev* commented that the President had been warmly received by the Soviet people during his first day in Moscow. The Muscovites’ feelings were sincere; nothing had been arranged for the President’s benefit. It was all spontaneous.

When the room was cleared, *General Secretary Gorbachev* opened the meeting by welcoming the President and his delegation. He commented that the delegation on both sides represented the most powerful and representative assemblage in many years. Indeed, it was 14 years since there had been a visit like this to Moscow. The people of the world looked with interest to these meetings in Moscow, which can have an enormous impact on world politics and international relations.

The General Secretary then called attention to the warm greeting the President was receiving from the Soviet people. The response in the streets was spontaneous. It did not have to be arranged or organized. "The Soviet people have a high regard for you, Mr. President, and for the American people," continued the General Secretary. Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze have established a good working relationship. Meetings have begun between our two defense ministers. What has taken place in the last 24 hours has merely emphasized the warm sentiment the Soviet people feel toward America and the American people.

"If, as you say in the West, 'politics should reflect the will of the electorate,' then relations between us should grow more cordial," *Gorbachev* continued. "You can see how the Soviet people feel. I understand the American electorate also favors a resolution of differences with the Soviet Union. Both peoples and the world at large are following the course of our deliberations. Our successes can benefit mankind. Similarly, every small mistake we make will be known around the world and lead to complaint and bitterness." "So," *Gorbachev* continued, "both of us must play our roles carefully, recognizing the importance of our task and displaying maturity and responsibility in dealing with the problems before us." The General Secretary concluded by suggesting that the two leaders continue the progress begun at Geneva.

The General Secretary then turned to his notes and said he believed that today would be given over to a general discussion of the state of the relationship. He then called on the President to make the first comments.

President Reagan observed that today was Memorial Day in the United States. This is the day, he explained, when our citizens honored those who had died for their country on the battlefield. The President observed that, during the preceding photo-op, when the press had asked *Gorbachev* if he had a Memorial Day message for the American people, the President had thought of all those who had died in previous conflicts. It had occurred to him that those sitting around the table were at that moment the most important in the world in terms of their ability to influence prospects for peace. That was the spirit in which he hoped to begin the present meeting.

The President said that he was glad that the two leaders had begun their discussions the day before with a review of human rights issues. That underscored the pride of place such issues held in our relationship. As the experts would be continuing their discussions in working groups, the President suggested moving on to new subjects.

Noting that the day before he and *Gorbachev* had agreed on the need to find ways of dispelling preconceptions, *the President* stressed the importance he attached to continued expansion of academic, cultural and other exchanges between the two societies. People-to-people exchanges, especially among the young, would contribute directly to better understanding, and thus to improved future relations.

The President therefore proposed that the two sides dramatically expand high school exchange programs to allow hundreds, and eventually thousands,

of Soviet and American young people to visit and learn in each other's schools, and to get to know each other's country first-hand. The President said he would mention this idea in his public remarks while in Moscow, adding that specific suggestions would be shared with Soviet representatives. In essence, the US proposal was to establish lasting institutional ties between individual American and Soviet high schools. The program could begin with 25 or 30 schools the first year, building to 100 in each country the second year. We would foresee, finally, 10 students, with appropriate adult escort, from each school, for a total of 1000 students for each side per year.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he could agree with the spirit of what the President had proposed. Before commenting in detail, however, he wanted to return to something the President had said—the notion that the people around the table had a great responsibility for seeking to change the world for the better. Gorbachev thought that in light of the progress which had been achieved since the Geneva Summit, it was possible to draw some conclusions.

First, *General Secretary Gorbachev* stated, it was important that the two sides meet regularly to discuss their differences. Second, the important political consultations now underway between the two countries' leaderships—as reflected in the important statements which had been issued—was [sic] acquiring a powerful momentum in world affairs. The ideas embodied in the Geneva statement, e.g., the notion that neither side would seek military superiority, had lost none of their force. It would be well to “corroborate” the Geneva document with an equally significant statement to the effect that it would be uncomfortable to achieve by military means results with which the world could feel comfortable. (Gorbachev quipped that he could see Carlucci's reaction, but not Yazov's.) Rather, the two sides could affirm the need to resolve difference [sic] by political means. Such a statement would provide positive momentum for years to come.

As for the President's specific proposal, *Gorbachev* could say that the Soviet side accepted it and was willing to discuss it in practical terms. The two leaders' colleagues could get down to business on the idea. Gorbachev agreed that exchanges, especially among the young, were seeds which could bear good fruit later on.

Moving on to arms control, *the President* noted that experts were already at work, but volunteered to summarize the state of play. The two sides' discussions on arms reductions had come a long way since the Geneva Summit. Progress had been registered across the whole spectrum of arms reduction problems, from intercontinental strategic forces to conventional forces, nuclear testing and chemical weapons. At each of the two leaders' meetings, they had been able to add another piece to the foundation. They should do the same in Moscow.

The INF Treaty reduced arsenals for the first time in the nuclear age, and set a tough new standard for verification. The two sides were well along the way to a START agreement. The President wanted to move ahead and complete START and Defense and Space (D&S) treaties that year. But we had to begin with a clean slate. Before we could enter into new agreements on strategic arms, we needed an understanding on how our concerns about Soviet activities that

we considered to be violations of the ABM Treaty would be resolved. This was a very important issue, as Congress raised questions on issues which were perceived as challenges.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he had the same problem with the Supreme Soviet. He felt that Congress would have difficulty fighting against peaceful proposals; it could not afford to be perceived as militaristic. But it was up to the Administration to put the issue squarely to them.

The President observed that it was not as easy as that. Congress was good at pointing fingers at the Administration when it lacked a good answer for issues which arose. The INF Treaty had been a success, but we had shed a lot of blood to get it. In any case, the President hoped that, at the end of his visit, he would be able to report that ways had been found to resolve the major questions blocking new agreements. The President was prepared, if Gorbachev agreed, to review what we viewed as the main obstacles.

Starting with strategic arms, *the President* noted that the two sides' negotiators in Geneva were working on a draft treaty to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 percent. There were several outstanding issues he and Gorbachev ought to address. First, they should agree to sublimits on ICBMs—the most destabilizing weapons systems—so as to strengthen stability and reduce incentives for a first strike. Second, they should work out a formula for attributing numbers to the nuclear-armed cruise missiles on heavy bombers, taking into account the differences in terms of stability between these slow-flying systems and ballistic missiles. The President noted that the US still preferred to ban mobile missiles, but was prepared to see if it were possible to pin down verification provisions for mobile ICBMs which would make it possible to determine whether limits were feasible.

Finally, because START dealt exclusively with nuclear forces, the President proposed the two sides work out procedures for removing from START constraints older heavy bombers that were converted to conventional missions, in other words, to work out means to exclude conventional bombers. The President asked if Gorbachev wished to comment.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he had a few remarks. His impression was that everything was settled with respect to medium and shorter-range nuclear missiles. It was important that the exchange of instruments of ratification of the INF Treaty would be an element in the Moscow Summit. The importance was political: this was the first disarmament treaty in post-war history.

The General Secretary expressed his thanks to the US team for its contribution to the INF Treaty; he hoped that reciprocal thanks would be forthcoming, as neither side could have done it alone. It was true, he acknowledged, that the US had been the first by a few hours to ratify the Treaty. It was also well that the final Senate vote had been so high—93 to 5. Neither side had expected such an impressive figure earlier. True, the Soviet side had done better—with 100 percent of the votes in favor.

As for strategic offensive arms, the Soviet side had already agreed to work on the question of sublimits by linking them to resolution of the mobile missile

issue. Moscow was aware that the US had concerns on this point; but so did the Soviet Union. The Soviet side, for example, wanted to apply sublimits to submarines. But if a solution could be found to the problem of mobile missiles—both with respect to a number and to verification provisions—it would also be possible to think about setting ICBM sublimits. The working group could work on the issue.

As for SLCMs, *General Secretary Gorbachev* wanted to set the record straight. It had been agreed in Reykjavik that SLCMs should be constrained. If they were not, and the two sides started down the path of 50-percent reductions, it would open the gate for a whole new arms race. There must be clarity on this point. Did Gorbachev correctly understand that the US was now prepared to agree to a limit on SLCMs?

Secretary Shultz said that the President had been talking about ALCMs.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he had misunderstood. There was a saying in Russian: “He who has a hurt, keeps talking about it.” So here was another for the President’s collections of proverbs.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he thought ALCMs could be discussed in a positive light. The Soviet side understood that the US felt it needed this system. It hoped for reciprocal US understanding of Soviet concerns about ALCMs and SLCMs. There seemed to be agreement that ceilings were necessary; it would be well if the two sides could agree on numbers.

General Secretary Gorbachev said his experts told him that it might be possible to find a solution to the ALCM problem on the basis of a compromise. If so, it would improve chances for an agreement on 50-percent reductions. Gorbachev could assure the President that the Soviet side wanted to sign a treaty while the Reagan Administration was still in power. Gorbachev had said yesterday that he had once said to Secretary Shultz that the two sides had arrived at a relationship which made it possible for them to discuss things calmly. Gorbachev was sorry that the Administration’s term of office was nearing an end. It was too bad it could not be extended, like Roosevelt’s. But the President should know that Moscow was ready to work on a START agreement right up to the end.

The President said he had some points to make on Defense and Space. The objective of SDI, he explained, was to make the US and its allies more secure, not to threaten the Soviet Union. The Soviet side knew the merits of defending itself, as it devoted far more resources to strategic defense than did the US. As the two leaders had discussed in Reykjavik, the US was willing in the context of a START agreement to agree to a period of nonwithdrawal from the ABM Treaty, after which, unless it were otherwise agreed, each side would be free to choose its own course of action.

The President said he could not agree to a nonwithdrawal provision until the Soviet Union had corrected its violations of the ABM Treaty. In Washington, he reminded Gorbachev, the General Secretary had made clear that he opposed the United States investigating advanced strategic defenses. Nonetheless, he had accepted that, at the end of a nonwithdrawal period, unless agreed otherwise, each

side would have the right to deploy strategic defenses if it so chose. This needed to be made clear in the agreement.

The US also needed, the President continued, the right to take necessary steps if its supreme interests were jeopardized by unexpected extraordinary events. This was standard in treaties. It needed as well to protect the right to research, develop and test advanced strategic defenses during the nonwithdrawal period, and could not accept restrictions beyond those actually agreed in the ABM Treaty. We had thus proposed an agreement not to object to each other's space-based sensors. Both sides used space to collect information for a variety of purposes. It was impossible to distinguish among these purposes. Why not agree not to make this the subject of unnecessary disputes? The two sides' negotiators, the President concluded, had put together a joint draft D&S agreement text. He proposed they be instructed to press ahead.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that that task could be facilitated if the US could accept a single formula in the treaty—that, if one side violated the ABM Treaty, the other would be free of its obligations under the treaty to reduce strategic arms by 50 percent. Such an approach would make it unnecessary to discuss what was or was not permitted under the ABM Treaty. But Secretaries Shultz and Carlucci argued against this.

Secretary Shultz reminded the General Secretary that the US viewed the Krasnoyarsk radar as a violation of the Treaty. The essence of the problem, however, was that the two sides did not agree on what was permitted by the Treaty with respect to research, development and testing. If that were agreed, the US would not have so many hang-ups. We had always felt that the Soviet Union agreed that during the period of strategic arms reductions, it would be a good thing to know what would be happening with respect to nonwithdrawal. But there was no such agreement.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he could give the President some free advice—even though Henry Kissinger would have charged him millions for the favor. The President, he stated amiably, was being deceived. He had initially been deceived by former Defense Secretary Weinberger; perhaps Carlucci was now doing the same thing. Some might think that it was possible to put something in space which could give the US an advantage (even though, Gorbachev pointed out, this would be contrary to one of the principles, which had been agreed to at the Geneva Summit). But during the proposed nonwithdrawal period—nine or eight and a half years—SDI was not a workable concept. If the President would tell his military people to confine their experiments to earth, nothing would happen. There was no need during this period for research in space. Attempts to conduct such research, on the other hand, would produce suspicion and mistrust. It would lead to a cooling of relations. That was why Gorbachev felt Carlucci, with Shultz's help, was moving the President in the wrong direction. He wanted to state this in their presence so they could defend themselves.

The President said that, before they did that, he had some things to say of his own. He had come into office believing in the instability of a world whose

security was based primarily on nuclear missiles. The average person could envision and was psychologically prepared to deal with the threat of conventional weapons. But when cities could be destroyed at the push of a button, it was another thing. Shortly after entering office, therefore, he had called in America's senior military leaders and asked if it would be possible to devise a system to render missiles obsolete. They had come back after consulting with our scientific community and said that, with a lot of time and resources, it could be done. The President had said, "Do it." So SDI from its inception has been a defensive weapon.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that the systems being developed in connection with SDI could be used for other than defensive purposes.

The President replied that Gorbachev was overlooking the President's frequently stated belief that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. The President believed nuclear weapons must be eliminated. When he had been informed that SDI was possible, the President had announced, if a workable system were devised, the US would make deployment of such a system available to all countries, and would not deploy until nuclear weapons had been eliminated.

But if nuclear weapons were eliminated, there would still be a need to ensure that no madman could obtain the knowledge necessary to develop a nuclear weapon and blackmail the world. The situation, *the President* explained, was akin to that after World War I. Poison gas had been banned, but people had kept their gas masks. The President said he really meant this. There had been breakthroughs, and US scientists were very optimistic SDI could work. But the purpose of the exercise was to eliminate the arsenals which could bring about such destruction in minutes. The nuclear accident at Chernobyl had shown what damage could be done with a release of radioactivity which was miniscule compared to that of even the smallest nuclear warheads. No one could be a victor in a nuclear war.

The President reiterated that if SDI were proved workable, it could not be put into effect until nuclear weapons were eliminated. It was not an offensive weapon in any way. It was, therefore, non-negotiable, as far as the President was concerned.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked why SDI would be necessary if all missiles were destroyed.

The President repeated that it was like a gas mask. It was impossible to unlearn the knowledge of how to build nuclear weapons. One had to be sure that a madman like Hitler was not at some point able to build a bomb and name his terms to the world.

General Secretary Gorbachev said one could not be too careful where nuclear weapons were concerned. He reaffirmed that the Soviet side believed SDI was not just a defensive system, but also would provide a means of attacking targets on Earth. The question also arose as to why, if one party wanted to build such weapons, the other should make it easy for him. It was one thing for SDI to defend against a certain number of missiles; it was another for it to stop that

number times X. But if both sides devoted all their national wealth to such a competition, the discussions the two sides were having were meaningless. Stability would also suffer. The capital which had been accrued in negotiations to date would be undermined; mistrust would arise; Moscow would have to consider a response.

The President reminded Gorbachev that he had offered in Geneva to share development of SDI with the Soviet Union.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he had to express doubt as to that offer. He pointed out that the US had refused to work out a system of on-site inspection of SLCMs aboard US warships. How could one believe that America would open its laboratories. This simply was not serious. The two sides were talking about matters of life and death.

Secretary Carlucci noted that there was a difference between verifying an operational system and exchanging data and mutual observation opportunities relating to research and development.

General Secretary Gorbachev said Carlucci had not convinced him. He reiterated that the two sides should proceed on the basis of the Washington Summit statement language on the ABM Treaty. In that connection, he noted that the US had raised the question of sensors. Perhaps the experts could talk more about that. But Gorbachev urged the President to think about what he had said. The President was listening only to scientists like Teller, not to scientists, including those in Europe and the Soviet Union, who had very different views. So the experts could work, but Gorbachev hoped the President would weigh what he had said.

On the Krasnoyarsk radar, *General Secretary Gorbachev* added, several things needed to be kept in mind. First, construction had been stopped. Second, US “scientists” (sic)⁴⁷ had visited the site and found nothing. Finally, the Soviet side had expressed its willingness totally to dismantle the radar if an agreement were reached. Gorbachev reminded the President that there were also US “forward” radars which should not be forgotten. But experts could discuss all of this, “including the US sensor idea,” in Geneva.

Moving to verification, *General Secretary Gorbachev* stated that the problem here was resistance on the part of the US leadership and US Navy. The President had earlier been a strong advocate of verification. Now the Soviet side had to talk the US into it. Was the earlier position a bluff? It was the same for chemical weapons. Now it seemed that factories and ships could not be included. What was to be inspected? The White House and Kremlin? The two leaders had now visited both sites themselves. They had to move forward on verification.

The President said he thought both sides understood the importance of excluding certain things which bore no relationship to weapons. For example, on mobile missiles, we were talking about how to count them, not how they were manufactured. The key was to be able to determine if agreed ceilings had been

⁴⁷ (Sic) appears in the original document. [Editors]

exceeded. That went for the Soviet side as well. That was the problem verification had to deal with, rather than exposing techniques one side or the other was using to manufacture weapons.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he agreed, but stressed that the two sides should be talking verification in comprehensive terms. Privately owned facilities should not be excluded. Ownership was irrelevant; the question was what could be produced. Moscow would be very stringent on verification issues.

Secretary Shultz clarified that the question of excluding private manufacturing facilities had arisen in the CW negotiations. For its part, the US was not drawing distinctions on the basis of private versus government ownership. *Secretary Carlucci* noted that neither had we made this an issue in negotiating the INF Treaty.

General Secretary Gorbachev suggested that the US may have removed its demand with respect to CW. In that case, the only obstacle to conclusion of a CW convention was the US binary program.

Secretary Shultz noted that the President had some points on CW. There had been some progress on that issue. There was a good statement to be included in a Summit concluding document. The Secretary recalled what a strong impression photographs of the effects of CW use against Kurdish civilians in the Iran-Iraq War had made at the time of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's March visit to Washington. This had redoubled our determination to come to grips with this issue. This was why it was essential that all states with CW manufacturing capability sign on to a convention.

The President said that the language in the agreed joint statement would help bring about further progress. Nonetheless, much work remained to be done on a chemical weapons ban, especially in the areas of verification and ensuring the participation of all states. And no solutions were yet in sight for these problems. The situation was similar to that with respect to strategic defense. Given the conflicts in the world, any CW ban had to be comprehensive. Both sides ought to work toward that goal.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he had consulted his notes, which indicated that as yet there was no agreement on the question of inspecting private and multinational plants. Was there a change in the US position? Was it true that the US was not excluding such facilities?

Secretary Carlucci confirmed that the US was not excluding private facilities.

General Secretary Gorbachev welcomed this clarification. This was what he had wanted to be clear on.

General Powell pointed out that the disagreement was over the size of the "net." No one was talking about declaring "open season." Categories needed to be carefully defined.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked how that squared with the President's concern that prohibited activities could be taking place without the knowledge of parties to a convention. General Powell's clarification had raised questions about the workability of a CW verification scheme. If there were a convention, anyone with a manufacturing capability should adhere. This, in turn, implied

comprehensive verification provisions. But this was an issue for further discussion at another time.

For the moment, *General Secretary Gorbachev* continued, he wanted to address the US proposal for an agreement on launches of missiles within national territories. *Secretary Shultz* noted that the US proposal had related to ballistic missile launches. *General Secretary Gorbachev* said that the Soviet side agreed to the proposal. It had an additional suggestion to make, but authorization should be given to finalize the US proposal for signature during the President's visit. *Secretary Shultz* said we could do that.

General Secretary Gorbachev continued that the Soviet side would also like to propose that experts reach agreement—or at least begin discussions—on launches of ALCMs and SLCMs, as well as of mass take-offs of 100 or more heavy bombers, of exercises of strategic forces, and of ballistic missiles in depressed trajectories. Agreement on such steps would increase predictability and reduce the threat of miscalculation. So perhaps experts could study this even as they elaborated an ICBM test launch notification agreement.

Secretary Carlucci asked if *Gorbachev* was proposing to ban depressed trajectory missile test launches, or simply to notify in advance that they would take place.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he was talking about notification. As for depressed trajectory tests, he was not proposing a ban, but that could be discussed. The US had proposed this at one point. It could be discussed.

Secretary Shultz noted that there were two things to consider. One was an agreement on ballistic missile test launch notification, regardless of trajectory. That could be signed in Moscow. (*General Secretary Gorbachev* interjected that he was talking about launches *within* national territories.) *Secretary Shultz* said that the second issue was a proposed discussion of notification of other activities. This was something we could certainly agree to study.

General Secretary Gorbachev said this might be reflected in instructions to delegations in a joint statement. *The President* said that a test launch agreement would be a concrete example of the progress being made by our START delegations.

General Secretary Gorbachev suggested moving on to a discussion of conventional weapons reductions in Europe. Things seemed to be moving in a good direction, and it appeared it would be possible in the near future to agree on a conference. The key was agreement on the substance of the negotiations. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had briefed the General Secretary on the Foreign Ministers' discussions in Geneva with *Secretary Shultz*, where agreement had been reached on a formula to describe that substance. The formula was: "the subject matter of the negotiations will be conventional armed forces and conventional armaments and equipment. No conventional forces, armaments and equipment are to be excluded because they are capable of employing other than conventional armaments. Nuclear weapons are not a subject of negotiations."

General Secretary Gorbachev asserted that the ministers had agreed that the formula should be referred to the mandate negotiations in Geneva for further

work. If the US was willing to confirm this approach, the Soviet side was willing to decide the matter now and have that reflected in the joint statement. This would have tremendous significance.

The President asked if Gorbachev had said that no nuclear weapons should be included. It was the US view that the Soviet side enjoyed an advantage with respect to conventional weapons. We believed that inequality should be eliminated before we addressed battlefield nuclear weapons. To focus on nuclear weapons would leave a disparity. If one were really interested in defense, neither side should retain a superiority.

General Secretary Gorbachev reminded the President that that issue had come up during the Washington Summit. Gorbachev had questioned whether the Soviet Union enjoyed conventional superiority when one considered the area from the Atlantic to the Urals. To resolve that question, the Soviet side had since proposed an exchange of relevant data. For some reason the US did not like the proposal. Did the President know why? It was because there was no superiority on the Soviet side. Propaganda was one thing. But facts were facts. There was a certain Soviet advantage in the Central area; but on the southern flank, NATO had an advantage of 1.5 to 1. By a different measure, the East had an advantage in tanks; but the West had an advantage in air power.

Secretary Carlucci pointed out that the Warsaw Pact had more aircraft deployed than NATO. *General Secretary Gorbachev* said this was not a serious way of looking at the problem.

The General Secretary again stressed that it would be good to get down to actual negotiations on conventional arms. As Moscow saw it, there should be three stages.

The task of the first would be to identify and remove imbalances and asymmetries. To do that, the Soviet side proposed baseline on-site inspections to remove any differences in assessments. In a nutshell, if the subject matter of the negotiations could be identified, if there were an exchange of data right away, it would be possible to get down to negotiations and see how the data corresponded to reality, and then see how to reduce any asymmetries.

A second stage would reduce forces by 500,000 on a side. A third would give the remaining forces a defensive character incompatible with the conduct of offensive operations. At any stage, the Soviet side would be prepared for reciprocal mutual reductions with respect to tactical nuclear weapons, dual capable aircraft, tanks, etc. It would also be prepared to consider agreements on measures to establish corridors separating forces from one another, nuclear free zones, and similar confidence building measures.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked why the US and West European governments were holding back in this area, acting as if Soviet proposals were a red flag to a bull. The two sides needed to get beyond propaganda. A good basis had been laid for statements in Moscow.

Secretary Shultz said that both sides wanted to move ahead on conventional arms reductions. The question was how to do so. We believed the best way

was to start in Vienna and complete a mandate. Gorbachev had read a statement which the ministers had discussed in Geneva. It was a good statement. But it had to be marketed to our respective allies. This would be easier if it came forward as a proposal in Vienna. If we handed our allies something which looked as if it had been agreed in advance, they would get sore. So we believed that the substance that had been talked about was satisfactory; the task now was to find a way to move forward in Vienna.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked what should be said in a Moscow final document on the matter.

Secretary Shultz said that we needed to be careful. Most of the weaponry being discussed did not belong to the US. It would be better for the idea to emerge in Vienna than in Moscow.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked what role the Summit could play in this. Should it not confirm what Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had said in Geneva? And then it could be sent to Vienna to be finalized.

Secretary Shultz said that the language agreed to in Geneva was good. We had agreed to get it into play in Vienna. What had happened then, however, was that the Soviet representative had described it as “agreed.” This had riled our allies. We were now seeking to get them to agree to the approach which had been discussed. We didn’t want to aggravate the situation.

General Secretary Gorbachev asserted that the two sides’ recent experience in finding formulae suggested communique language could be found which, rather than cause problems with each side’s allies, would lead them to applaud.

Secretary Shultz said that, in addition to agreeing on a mandate, there was the question of a balanced outcome to the Vienna CSCE Follow-up meeting. We needed to see some outcome in the human rights basket which would satisfy our concerns.

In this regard, the Secretary had read the day before the recently published, so-called “theses” for the upcoming 17th [sic] CPSU Conference. (*Gorbachev* asked why the Secretary referred to them as “so-called.” They were in fact theses. *Secretary Shultz* said he stood corrected.) In any case, the document was clearly one of the most significant to appear in the Soviet Union in a long time.

What had particularly struck the Secretary was that the Soviet representative to the Follow-up meeting ought to read the theses. The attitude he was currently displaying in Vienna would make it impossible, if applied to the Soviet Union itself, to reach what the theses described. If, on the other hand, one could get the right outcome on human rights in Vienna, it would be possible to move ahead on a mandate.

Secretary Shultz added that the US had no problem with the concept of a data exchange, although our 14 years of experience with MBFR gave us some pause on that score. We recognized the need to get on with the substance of conventional forces. So what was needed was to give the right stimulus in Vienna, as we had been able to do during the Stockholm CDE endgame.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked if the President had noted the Soviet proposal that, once negotiations on conventional forces began, on-site inspections

would be used to identify asymmetries and then act. Something seemed to be emerging. This reminded Gorbachev of a story his granddaughter had told him recently. It seemed an old man and woman one night had heard a knock at the door. Opening it, they found an egg, which they put under their hen. But when it hatched, a three-headed dragon emerged instead of a chick. On conventional forces, Gorbachev said, both sides needed to be sure they got what they expected, not a three-headed dragon.

Moving to a new subject, *the President* noted that ballistic missile proliferation in the Middle East and South Asia threatened both countries. If not stopped or slowed down, it was certain to change the military environment in the region. The last thing either side wanted was for that to happen, but that was where things were headed. We could sit back and wait for Iran, Libya and others to marry up chemical warheads with ballistic missiles. Or we could get serious.

The President suggested it would be possible to talk seriously about respective assessments of the problem, and about ways to apply diplomatic and public pressure on those providing the material and know-how to countries in the region, as well as about strategies for working with friends to stop or control this trend. Noting the recent use of ballistic missiles in the Iran-Iraq War, the President expressed the hope that the Soviet side was ready for such a discussion.

General Secretary Gorbachev agreed that this was a real problem. Moscow had been disturbed when missiles it had sold Iraq had, with the aid of Western nations, been given a range of 700 km. It appeared that China and Brazil had been involved. So the problem existed. The two sides should express their concern about this and take it into account in their practical policies. What would happen, for example, if ballistic missiles were used against France, which relied on nuclear plants for 60 percent of its power.

Secretary Carlucci said the US was prepared to engage in such a discussion.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he could agree in principle. He was ready to interact. But he did not want to surprise Yazov by agreeing without consulting with him.

Secretary Shultz noted the irony of countries like China welcoming the INF Treaty and then selling missiles in the same range band to Saudi Arabia.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that ultimately it would be necessary to involve other countries capable of manufacturing nuclear missiles. But, he said jocularly, that would be a decision for the President's successor to make.

The President reiterated the importance in this context of ending the Iran-Iraq War.

US-Soviet relations, *the General Secretary* said, could not be based solely on current realities, important though those realities were. Looking beyond the year 2000, Gorbachev could say off the record, he was convinced that the two countries were "doomed" to cooperate with one another. Many new factors were emerging which would force the two to cooperate. So the positive atmosphere which had been established over the past three years had to be preserved. The capital which had accumulated should be put to good use.

The President said that the people around the table could make a major contribution to peace in the future.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he agreed. Noting that the time allotted for the meeting was up, he quipped that the two leaders had learned to be punctual.

He and the President, *the General Secretary* concluded, had acquired a good deal of experience in dealing with one another. Different issues were always emerging. But they called forth new energies.

The President agreed, and the meeting concluded after the two leaders engaged briefly in informal conversations with their delegations.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 61: Department of State Cable, “The President’s Human Rights Reception a Success”

May 30, 1988

Number one item on Reagan’s four-part agenda for relations with the USSR (and emphasized in NSDD 305 “Objectives for the Moscow Summit” on April 26)⁴⁸ was human rights. Contact with dissidents, students, and religious leaders was envisioned by Reagan to be a major component of the summit. In the first part of 1988, the Soviets actively engaged with members of the administration trying to address human rights concerns. A special humanitarian desk was created at the Foreign Ministry headed by Anatoly Adamishin, who worked closely with his U.S. counterpart Richard Schifter. By the summit, the Soviet side accommodated practically all U.S. requests to meet with people who earlier would have been persecuted for having contact with Americans. This cable written by U.S. ambassador Jack Matlock describes a highlight of Reagan’s trip to Moscow, the reception at the ambassador’s residence, Spaso House, on May 30, 1988, for 42 leading dissidents and refuseniks, along with their families. Matlock reports that the reception “went off without a hitch, thanks in part to KGB and militia cooperation” (indeed, the KGB and militia, under strict instructions from the leadership, acted professionally and courteously, providing security and traffic control for the meeting, which was noted by the participants, who were not accustomed to such treatment. Matlock added that the President’s speech was “vigorously applauded,” and that “Soviet media commentary followed swiftly and was biting and sarcastic.”

Subject: The President’s Human Rights Reception a Success

1. Confidential—Entire Text
Summary
2. The President’s reception for dissidents and *refuseniks* May 30 went off without a hitch, thanks in part to KGB and militia cooperation. After presentations by Sergey Kovalev, Yuliy Kosharovskiy, and Father Gleb Yakunin, the President gave a speech on human rights that his audience vigorously applauded. The reception was covered by a press pool, including Soviet journalists, who made a point of seeking out Sergey Grigor’yants for an interview. Soviet media commentary followed swiftly and was biting and sarcastic.
End Summary
Guests Arrive with Few Problems

⁴⁸ NSDD 305, April 26, 1988, Ronald Reagan Library. <https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/Scanned%20NSDD%20NSDD305.pdf>.

3. The President's reception for *refuseniks* and [sic] dissidents went surprisingly well. All those invited who wished to come were present. Although pedestrian access to both the embassy and Spaso were blocked for the duration of the President's visit, Soviet militia and KGB agents facilitated embassy efforts to first board guests at the embassy and then drive them to Spaso, through the three—or four—layers of Soviet security there. There were a total of ninety-eight reception guests, including small children and one infant—whose cries distracted guests from the speeches but added a homey touch to the proceedings. Guests had come from the Baltics, Ukraine, Georgia, Central Asia, and a number of Russian cities. (Complete guest list follows septel.)

Kovalev, Kosharovskiy, and Yakunin Speak

4. Sergey Kovalev (a Moscow University biologist fired in 1969 for protesting the invasion of Czechoslovakia and subsequently editor of the "Chronicle of Current Events") was the first speaker, covering general human rights issues, particularly stressing the need to release all political and religious prisoners and to reform the legal system. He called on the West to support *perestroyka* but not to the detriment of human rights. Yuliy Kosharovskiy (a *refusenik* of seventeen years) then spoke on the problems of Jewish *refuseniks*, discussing both the difficulties of emigration and of maintaining a Jewish identity in the Soviet Union. Finally Gleb Yakunin (a Russian Orthodox priest and founder in the 1970s of the committee to protect the rights of believers who was subsequently imprisoned. He was released from exile last year) delivered what was generally agreed to be the best presentation—a concise but moving description of the degeneration of Soviet society, that he blamed largely on the attempts to ban religion, and a call to release all political and religious prisoners. Whereas Kovalev had stated that since he could not name all political prisoners he would name none, Yakunin singled out Deacon Vladimir Rusak and Lithuanian Catholic priests Svarinskas and Tamkevicius. (Note. A number of activists from Ukraine complained that there was no speaker from a minority nationality; they asked that the embassy have more direct contact with them rather than going through Moscow activists. In particular, they asked that we deal with the "Inter-Nationality Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners" ("Mezhnatsional'nyi komitet v zashchite politzaklyuchennykh") when questions of national minorities arise, since this committee has taken on broader responsibilities than just the defense of political prisoners.)

A Family Event

5. Many guests brought their children, including some who were quite small, several of whom wandered among the tables during the speeches. The mood was informal but inspired—all the speakers garnered loud applause, with the audience repeatedly interrupting the President's speech. Afterward, the Soviet guests' comments were universally positive. Many were clearly moved by the event and the President's attention to their cause.

Buses returned the guests to the embassy, where most soon departed, although some remained and spoke to a few Western journalists under the watchful eye of our embassy guards.

Press Coverage

6. The regular press pool—fifteen Soviet, fifteen American, and fifteen international correspondents—covered the reception. At the end, some sought out individual activists for interviews. The Soviet TV crew made a special point of seeking out Sergey Grigor'yants—who was harshly attacked by Gorbachev in his recent *Washington Post* interview. Soviet media was swift and biting. "Vremya," the Soviet evening news program, included coverage of the Spaso event in reporting the day's summit activity. "Vremya" featured a sharp commentary by Soviet peace committee chairman and political commentator Genrikh Borovik. He made sarcastic reference to the Spase [sic] guest list, claiming that one invitee was a former Nazi camp guard who had participated in the arrest and killing of Soviet partizans [sic]. Borovik commented that the Kremlin was not "irritated" as had been reported in some quarters, but lamented that the President would "waste time" on people who could not provide an objective picture of Soviet society. The reception had clear propaganda purposes, Borovok [sic] added, noting that it was clearly not intended to be a serious discussion. "Pravda" and "Izvestiya" in their May 31 editions echoed Borovik. "Pravda" called the Spaso event a "show" featuring "opponents of perestroika." "Izvestiya" charged the White House used support for human rights for propaganda purposes and questioned the President's sincerity by noting he has not made time to receive American Indians and others in the U.S. whose human rights have been trampled upon. While the "Vremya" account noted that Grigor'yants who had been "convicted of speculation in art work" and recently criticized by Gorbachev, had been present, "Izvestiya" failed to name him. Instead, the organ of the Soviet Council of Ministers singled out Ogorodnikov, Timofeyev, Rozhko (who the paper claimed had worked for the Germans), Abe Stolar (who it was noted was not a *refusenik*), and [sic] Father Edel'shteyn.
7. Leningrad Minimize Considered. Matlock.

[Source: U.S. State Department, cable, Moscow 13595, obtained through FOIA in 1997 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 62: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Second Private Meeting, Moscow,
10:08 a.m. – 11:07 a.m.

May 31, 1988

This conversation begins with Reagan's presentation to Gorbachev of an American-made denim jacket, which Gorbachev calls "a memorable gift." But Reagan does not know whether it will actually fit the Soviet leader. Clearly, the personal relationship has grown quite warm over the past three years. After Gorbachev tells Reagan about various Soviet citizens who have named their kids after Ron and Nancy, the two leaders discuss perestroika, capitalism, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, a chocolate brownie entrepreneur, border controls, Cuban-Americans in Miami, and assorted matters. They end with a philosophical agreement that their real task is to "eliminate the distrust that has led to the arms race."

As the press was leaving the office, General Secretary Gorbachev invited Senator Baker to stay for the conversation. *The Senator* thanked Gorbachev but replied that he was not scheduled to be there and would wait outside.

The President said he knew Gorbachev was aware of the American habit of giving gifts from friends, and also knew something of American wardrobe. He had a gift from a friend in the American West that he wanted Gorbachev to have, a denim jacket. *Gorbachev* said it was a memorable gift. He asked if it was his size. *The President* regretted he had had no way of knowing that. *Gorbachev* said it would be in any case a marvelous souvenir. This was one he would keep at home.

The President said he also had a small insignia pin for Gorbachev. *Gorbachev* said he had seen the President wear it the day before, and envied him for it; the President must have noticed him looking at it very carefully.

Gorbachev said that since the President was in the Kremlin for the first time on this trip, he had given him a scale model of the Kremlin as a gift. *The President* asked Gorbachev to forgive him for not having thanked him for his magnificent gifts. He wished to do so on his and Nancy's behalf. He now had a crown of his own. *Gorbachev* recalled that Nancy had mentioned the scale model the night before. It was precise, but of course much reduced. In actual size, the Kremlin perimeter ran 2.4 kilometers.

Gorbachev said he noticed the President had notes, but before the President spoke (here Gorbachev moved to his desk), he wanted to show the President something pleasant: some of the letters and cables sent to him at the Kremlin.

The first was from Norilsk, the northern-most city in the Soviet Union, above the Arctic Circle. The writer had sent it to the President here. To commemorate this visit, he had called his first daughter Regina. He hoped the visit would be

a symbol of peace and friendship. His city, street and apartment address were shown.

Next was one from Yerevan, *Gorbachev* went on. The writer said he had seen the President give his 1986 greetings to the Soviet people, and when his son was born, he had named him Ronald after the President. In accordance with convention, he asked the President to become godfather to his son.

Someone wrote from Togliatti on the Volga, where they made cars, *Gorbachev* continued, and had named his newborn daughter Nancy in honor of the President's wife.

From Grodno in Byelorussia, there was again a son, again named Ronald, and again a request that the President be the godfather.

Another was from Yerevan, addressed to both of them. It spoke of the mothers of the world with tears in their eyes, hopeful and confident that reason and humanism would prevail, that there would be an agreement. The writer wished the President all the best. She was a widow of a colonel who was a war veteran.

Another came from Ivanovo, in the Ukraine. It was a textile town, where many women were employed, and the message was to both of them, from a woman, a mother and grandmother, on behalf of all women in the textile district. *Gorbachev* noted that half of Soviet textiles were produced there. She asked them to decide to eliminate all nuclear weapons. There had been many similar letters.

Here was a veteran from Gomel, in Byelorussia, *Gorbachev* continued. He had probably heard the President's TV interview where he praised Russian women. He wrote that America had not had a war for 150 years, while Russia had had so many. There were many others.

Gorbachev said he would give the President all these messages. They were still coming in, but when they were all there, he would transmit them to the President through the Embassy. This was just a small portion of them. He had told Nancy about them, and she had asked that they be given to the President.

The President said he would receive them with pleasure and respond to them; he would send photos to the children named after him or Nancy.

Gorbachev said that would be greatly appreciated. These messages had not been organized. They were still coming in. They much resembled the kind of letters he got from America. Some mentioned difficulties; some questioned whether it was right to expand interaction with America. When he replied to them, he explained the interests at stake, for the two countries and the world. That was why he and the Soviet leadership said that the Soviet Union and the US had a special role.

The President said we had such people too. But he had one simple rule: you don't get in trouble by talking to each other, and not just about each other. *Gorbachev* said "right."

The President said he had read *Gorbachev's* book *Perestroika*. He had come with some questions about where *Gorbachev* was going, what steps he wanted to take to make life better for the people, what actions could be taken.

Gorbachev said he assumed the President had not had time to read the theses for the party conference that was going to take place in about a month. He

guessed he had not had time to ask his experts about them. They provided answers to many of the questions that were being asked here, by the Soviet Union's Western partners, and also by other socialist countries. He would like to say a few brief words about Perestroika.

The pivotal thing about Perestroika was democratization, *Gorbachev* continued. This referred to economic arrangements, but also to all other spheres. They wanted to expand autonomy (*samostoiatel'nost'*) in production enterprises, among workers, in the republics and the regions. Economic accountability had to be introduced. Cooperative enterprises were being expanded, and the people welcomed this. There was also the democratization of life. Individual enterprises of people were also being expanded.

The President interjected "yes," but *Gorbachev* continued that there would be more freedom for cooperatives and individual producers in the market.

In the political sphere, *Gorbachev* said, the main thrust was also more democratization. This was also true for the Party. It had to give up some of the functions it should not properly have. It should concentrate on developing political guidelines for domestic and foreign policy. When it came to management of the economy, this would be done more and more by elected bodies, by the soviets. They were also doing substantial work on legal reform, reform of the courts and legal institutions, including criminal law. They were also finishing up a document reforming the electoral system. They would be giving greater scope to social organizations and initiatives.

In all this, *Gorbachev* went on, there was one fundamental thing that he did not conceal from the President: it was the firm position that all these efforts were directed to developing socialism. When socialism was capable of movement, the people supported it and would do so even more in the future. It had been interesting that when they had published the draft law on cooperatives, and the draft law on the socialist enterprises, people wrote to the Central Committee and to the press asking if these laws did not represent a retreat from socialism, if they would not result in a gap between rich and poor in Soviet society. So there was discussion. *Gorbachev* said that was normal. He thought the Soviet Union was now the number one country in the world when it came to debate. There was more here than in America.

The President said the Soviet Union was an enormous country; there was a mass of people out there, and they were not all at the same level. There were geniuses out there who could really contribute if given a chance to use their initiative. To take an example, he visited various companies, and he had visited one motorcycle plant called Harley-Davidson. They were an established firm, and sometime ago, they suddenly began losing business to Japanese motorcycles that were being imported. *Gorbachev* knew that the first reaction in such a case was to call on the government for help, to restrain the number of imported Japanese motorcycles. *Gorbachev* nodded and said that was protectionism.

But, *the President* continued, instead of that, management had called in the people from the assembly lines. From the top managers to the assembly line workers,

they had opened up discussion on what to do. They got ideas from people who had been working there for years, suggesting improvements on how to do things better. And a reorganization had followed. They had reorganized the assembly lines. They had reorganized spare parts; previously, they had been stored together at a distance; now they were brought by conveyor to where the worker could reach over and get them. And the company was now making ten new models.

Gorbachev asked if they were competitive. *The President* replied that they were very competitive. Their business has flourished.

Gorbachev said the Soviets were now also looking at far-reaching forms of reorganization. They were now leasing land and means of production for five to ten years; productivity in these cases had increased by a factor of 1.5 to 2, immediately. They were introducing ways to give people incentives, and the quality was already better.

They had dealt a blow to large monopoly enterprises, *Gorbachev* went on. The US had capitalist monopolies, and the Soviet Union had socialist monopolies which often did not produce efficiently. For instance, there had been only one factory making combine harvesters. It had dictated to the market. Now there were three. The factory at Krasnoyarsk, like Harley-Davidson, had been on the verge of collapse. The collectives did not want to buy its products, and it had wanted the authorities to force them to. They had said “no,” it was up to the factory to change and produce better combines. Now they were producing a good combine. It was sold around the country; it was valued even in Siberia.

In their socialist society, *Gorbachev* went on, they did not want to level things out like a table. (He pounded on the coffee table in front of them with the flat of his hand.) The principle of the economy had to be that as you produce, so you earn. The better worker, the better scientist would be paid more.

The President said that even before the Soviet Union entered the world market, its best customers were its own people, who produced the goods and also bought them with their earnings. *Gorbachev* said that was exactly the case. The Soviet Union was a huge market. He had the impression that America was making up its mind whether to work with that market, whether to expand cooperation. Most countries had already made that decision in the affirmative. But in America there were old stereotypes at work. He knew that some people were asking: “Why help the Soviet Union expand? Wouldn’t it be better for it to be weak?”

The President said he did not feel that way at all. *Gorbachev* said he was not saying the President did, but there were people in the United States who were telling him differently. There had been hearings in Congress that went on for many months. He had received and read the transcripts. Of course, it was up to the businessmen and the Administration. The Soviets did not want to impose themselves. They were not begging for friendship.

The President said some people in Congress had passed and sent him a protectionist trade bill. He had vetoed it, and the veto had been sustained. It would have protected the US against imported products that other people made better. He had vetoed it, and *Gorbachev* knew what a veto meant.

Gorbachev said that the President might not know it, but the US had very high protectionist barriers to trade with the Soviet Union. For instance, tariffs on Soviet goods began at 20 percent and went up to 220 percent. The dead were still controlling the living. Jackson was long dead, but his amendment lived. Instead of most-favored-nation tariff treatment, the Soviet Union received most-unfavored-nation tariff treatment.

The President said that had to do with the problem they had often talked about: with human rights. People believed that the Soviets discriminated against practitioners of religion and the like, and that was their way of trying to work that out. The two of them had had discussions on that. *Gorbachev* surely knew where we stood.

Gorbachev asked what would happen if the Soviets began to inject such questions into bilateral relations, for instance, in the security field. He asked whether the Soviet Union should make claims on the US, such as on the rights of Hispanics, of whom there were six million without citizenship, or on the condition of American Indians on reservations. He asked whether the Soviets should say that because there were problems in the US, there should be no treaty, whether the Soviets should pass amendments of the kind that Congress had passed concerning the Baltic Republics, or the Ukraine. The Soviets could comment concerning individual U.S. states, for instance. Where would that take the Soviet-American relationship? But that was the wrong way to go. It was a heritage of the Cold War, and it should be eliminated. It really called for shock therapy, *Gorbachev* concluded.

The President replied that there was a difference between prohibiting people from the practice of religion, like Jewish people who had no synagogues, and social problems like those *Gorbachev* had raised. In the US, there were sociological factors at work. Indians, for instance, retained their own customs. The US had provided millions of acres of land to them so that they could retain their customs and traditions. Of course, they were free to go outside those reservations; no one said no; and many did, and became like other Americans. But the choice was theirs.

Turning to the Hispanics, *the President* said that the problem there was illegal entry. Good Lord, he said, Miami has been taken over by refugees from Castro's Cuba. They became citizens like everyone else. But we also had a long border with Mexico, where they sneaked in to try to get jobs. Those were the illegal immigrants. There was a limit to how many such people an economy could absorb.

At the reference to Miami, *Gorbachev* interjected that he could not believe the six million without citizenship all came from Cuba. He said, when the Soviet side had comments, the President was unwilling to accept criticism. *Zarechnak* finished interpretation of the preceding paragraph.

Gorbachev explained that he had not wanted to go into these issues; he had merely mentioned the problem of Soviet-American economic relations. The President had comments about Soviet life, the Soviets had comments about American life; that did not mean they should stop economic relations.

The President responded that he wanted to explain how things were. The Cubans had been refugees from political persecution. We had accepted them, and given them citizenship. It was like the boat people from Vietnam. For example, he had a letter from a young man. In it he told the President that ten years before he had been in a boat off Vietnam. The country had been conquered, and the boat was out of food and water. Then a ship had found them, and he had been brought to an island refugee camp. The President said he did not know how long the young man had been on the island, but the total difference had been ten years, and subtracting time on the island, he had been in the US probably less than ten years. He had learned our language; he had graduated from high school with honors; he had received a scholarship from Harvard University; and he wrote the President, at 23, as a student at a medical college. That was what was meant by refugee status.

But concerning illegal entry, *the President* continued, they had recently passed a new immigration law aimed at coping with illegal entry of people from countries like Mexico. There were quotas for legal immigration. But because there were so many illegals, with homes and jobs but insecure status, the law said that those who had come before 1982 had only to report and they would be given citizenship.

The President continued that there were other examples of opportunities in the United States which fit what Gorbachev wanted to do with Perestroika. He had met a young lady who had been educated as a professional pianist. Then, after she graduated, she had developed arthritis. It affected her hands, so that she could not play the piano. She was at home with a diploma but nothing to do. One day, an aunt had reminded her that she could bake brownies, little American cakes, that were the best her family had ever tasted. The aunt suggested that she sell them to grocery stores, to pick up a little money and keep busy. That was three or four years ago. *Gorbachev* interjected to predict that she now had a prosperous business. *The President* replied that she employed 35 people, and earned more than \$1 million a year. She sold to the airlines; she sold to top restaurants.

Gorbachev said he had to say once again that, since they had decided to move forward toward the future and expand bilateral relations, it was important to clear the log-jams from the past. There were a lot of them to clear. He thought the two countries needed greater mutual dependence, to ensure greater predictability in relations. They were now totally independent of each other economically. It seemed that they did not need each other. But that was not true. Life itself showed that they needed each other. They needed to cooperate more and more. As the President said, that was God's will.

The President recalled that 500 American businessmen had been in the Soviet Union. *Gorbachev* said it was true they had visited. But they had to operate in a kind of cage of protectionist measures and political restrictions that impeded trade. These were not adopted by the President but by others. *Gorbachev* said he saw this changing. He welcomed the fact that the President had supported the consortium idea. There had been three American businessmen who had followed along the path Premier Ryzhkov had taken in Siberia. When they returned, they

told Ryzhkov they had thought Siberia was a godforsaken place inhabited mainly by bears. But they saw that it was a highly developed place, and were convinced there was good business to be had there with new and modern cities.

Godspeed to them, *Gorbachev* said. But he thought the President should listen—he was not giving the President a lesson, just thinking aloud—he thought that, if the President listened to one person on one day and another the next day, his policies would be too changeable. But if he felt the mood of the people, he would feel the changes underway. People in both the US and the Soviet Union wanted to expand cooperation, and policies at the President's and Gorbachev's level should reflect that.

Gorbachev said that Perestroika was meeting with some resistance in certain quarters of the country. But he and the other leaders with him were not going to wipe out that resistance because they felt that the mood of the people was for Perestroika. The crucible of Perestroika would overcome the resistance.

The President said that the US had what Perestroika would give Gorbachev, and we were for it; he had said so in his speeches. But there was a great obstacle which would affect economic relations and even negotiations on disarmament. There were certain things that revealed high technology that we had and the Soviets didn't. They would help in a military way. They could not be sold to the Soviet Union. Probably the Soviets had such things that they would not make available to us.

What was the answer to this problem, *the President* continued. In their meetings, he and Gorbachev had to continue the job they had started: to eliminate the distrust that had led to the arms race. If they could eliminate mistrust, the feeling that they threatened each other militarily, then those restrictions too could go.

Gorbachev said he welcomed that statement. *The President* added that there would be opposition. Let us move ahead, Gorbachev said, to build more trust. Of course, it was important for the two of them to do as much as they could while Ronald Reagan was still President of the United States, and to ensure continuity and consistency after his term ended, so that the foundation they had laid for moving forward would remain.

The President said he would do all he could to make sure that his successor moved along that line. He hoped and prayed it would be George Bush; he knew he (Bush) shared all these ideas. *Gorbachev* suggested they begin their walk. *The President* continued jokingly that, if it were a Democrat, he would warn Gorbachev against him. *Gorbachev* said jovially that during the previous evening's dinner he had told Secretary Carlucci that the Soviets regretted the approach of the end of this Administration just as progress in relations was being made. But when he had found out that George Shultz was an ex-Marine and Carlucci had been in the Navy, and that both opposed inspection of naval forces, he figured it was all right for the Administration to go. But, he concluded, that was just a friendly joke.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 63: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Second Plenary Meeting, Moscow,
10:05 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

June 1, 1988

This final official session before the exchange of ceremonial INF ratification documents centers around presentations by Shevardnadze and Shultz of the two sides' positions, about which the best that can be said is that the discussions so far have been friendly and candid, even though not much progress has been made. When Gorbachev and Reagan give their own summaries, the discussion of regional issues in particular shows their very different perspectives. As Gorbachev puts it: "the American assessment as to the cause of regional problems was at variance with Soviet assessments." Gorbachev returns to the draft statement he gave to Reagan on the first day, and reminds him of his initial positive reaction, which would be quickly rescinded once the document was in the hands of Shultz, Carlucci, Powell and the other senior U.S. officials. Why not sign off on such a strong declaration, Gorbachev asks, rather than the rather bland Joint Statement produced by the staff negotiators? But the Americans respond by pointing to several instances of objectionable phrasing, and even a last-minute personal plea from Gorbachev to Reagan does not reverse the American decision.

While photos were being taken, several questions were shouted at the President and General Secretary Gorbachev. The first was from an American reporter, who asked if it were true that the President was not feeling well. The *President* replied that he had slept well and that he was feeling fine.

The second question in Russian inquired as to whether there had been any surprises as yet at the Summit. *General Secretary Gorbachev* responded that our joint effort was devoted to eliminating surprises and to establishing a relationship based on greater predictability.

The President was then asked to assess progress at the Summit. The *President* replied that the meetings had been proceeding in an excellent manner, and that he was pleased with the progress to date. A further question concerned progress in the START negotiations. The President replied that these negotiations were complicated, but that profitable work was continuing. To another question as to whether there were fewer problems in START now than before the Moscow Summit began, the President's reply was "Yes, there are fewer problems now." The President answered a follow-on question about SDI by responding that there had been no breakthrough or new major development.

The *President* and the *General Secretary* then said that they would be having press conferences later and would take additional questions at that time. As

the room was being cleared of reporters, the President and the General Secretary shook hands across the table several times for photographers.

The *General Secretary* then opened the session by observing that the last few days had been full and productive. He joked that he would be asking President Gromyko for salary increases for all participants, given the difficult conditions under which everyone was working. The General Secretary then asked the President whether he would agree to the following schedule: Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary Shultz would report briefly on their discussions and those conducted by experts and working groups. Then, suggested Gorbachev, the two leaders could respond and proceed to a discussion of regional issues in some detail, because these had not been touched on in previous plenary meetings.

President Reagan agreed to this arrangement, and the *General Secretary* then asked Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to begin.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze recalled that, based on instructions of the President and the General Secretary, discussion was arranged at the Ministerial and working level to study individual questions. Results by the experts and working groups could be summed up as follows: A draft Joint Statement had been prepared for approval. There are portions of it that are quite weak, in the Soviet view, but on the whole it is a solid paper, which records improvements across the board in our relationship. It sets forth the achievements we have reached in arms control, regional issues, bilateral matters and humanitarian affairs, the four agenda items we agreed to in Geneva in 1985.

Shevardnadze said the Joint Statement analyzes the main trends in Soviet-American relations since Geneva. It records the many differences that still persist in our relations, but it lists the positive changes that have occurred. These changes are rather impressive as stated in this document. The Joint Statement could gain if a general provision were added "along the lines our two leaders discussed on Sunday." Shevardnadze then read the following three-sentence paragraph, which, he claimed, should raise no issue of principle:

Proceeding from their understanding of the realities that have taken shape in the world today, the two leaders believe that no problem in dispute can be resolved, nor should it be resolved, by military means. They regard peaceful co-existence as a universal principle of international relations. Equality of all states, non-interference in internal affairs and freedom of socio-political choice must be recognized as the inalienable and mandatory standards of international relations.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze reported that the President had reacted positively to this formulation. Some of the phrases were not accepted by the American side, and compromise language was proposed by the Soviets. These changes too proved unacceptable to the American negotiators. Shevardnadze said he hoped the United States would still give consideration to the Soviet formulation. It was not yet too late to accept this language. At a minimum, US views on this paragraph should be explained more fully.

The Joint Statement as it now stood, *Shevardnadze* continued, reflected the many new ideas which had been developed these past few days in Moscow. The text recorded our agreement to establish an expanded framework through which human rights issues could be discussed in a new, positive spirit. The statement talks of the possibility of flights to Mars, records our agreement to discuss the growing problem of ballistic missile proliferation, and lists our agreement to expand the exchange of school students. It also provides information on the seven new bilateral agreements reached and signed at the Summit.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze then began a quick review of the progress made in the political and military sphere. On arms control, he said, there had been difficulty in making substantial progress toward the 50-percent reduction, but that both sides had agreed to continue with the Geneva negotiations and provide negotiators with fresh impetus. *Shevardnadze* noted also the continuing problems in relating the ABM Treaty to a reduction of strategic arms. He spoke, too, about the lack of progress with respect to airborne cruise missiles and SLBMs, but noted that some advance had been made on counting rules for ALCMs and heavy bombers. Some convergence of ideas in these two fields had been achieved, and both sides have agreed to give detailed instructions to their respective delegations.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said the two sides were divided on a variety of other key issues. The US has refused to set ceilings on sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) or agree to on-board verification. The United States remains committed to the idea of unilateral statements without verification. *Shevardnadze* said the Soviet position on this subject was clear and fixed.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze went on to note that the agreement on ballistic missile launch notification had been signed on Tuesday and that in the area of nuclear testing, agreement had been reached to conduct two joint verification experiments. This agreement, signed on May 1, opened up good possibilities for putting into force the protocol of the 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty and accelerating work on the 1976 Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty. It was our joint hope, said *Shevardnadze*, to complete the verification protocol even before the joint verification experiments were conducted in the summer of 1988.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze then said that he would like to review where matters stood on conventional arms. *General Secretary Gorbachev* interrupted to ask what had happened at the conventional mandate discussions in Vienna. The *Foreign Minister's* reply was that a working group had been reviewing this subject. The formula for the mandate at Vienna had been the main issue discussed. Some convergence of positions had been recorded, except for aircraft, and the two delegations in Vienna would be invited to pursue the issue further. The *Foreign Minister* said the US has expressed some interest in the *Gorbachev* proposal on conventional arms set forth on Monday, and was willing to consider further informal discussions of this proposal. The Americans, on the other hand, *Shevardnadze* reported, were opposed to discussion of naval forces. The Soviets, in contrast, attached great importance to such a dialogue.

In the area of chemical arms, the two sides had made progress, and this was reflected in the Soviet-American Joint Statement. There was certainly agreement on the need to prevent proliferation and to arrange effective verification.

On regional issues, *Foreign Minister Shevardnadze* said that all the regular topics had been discussed. He mentioned specifically the Horn of Africa, the Persian Gulf, Angola, Korea, Cambodia, the Middle East, and Central America. Each topic had been reviewed at the experts' level and between the Foreign Ministers on Tuesday. On each, deep and serious differences remain. In a few areas, the method and procedures for settlement seemed in sight, but further work was required. With respect to Southern Africa, there had been talk of speeding up implementation of UN Resolution 435. This was certainly in everybody's interest. In the Middle East, one could say there was a better understanding of each other's positions and the differences that separate us. These differences concerned the nature and functioning of any future international conference. There was also the Palestinian representation question. *Shevardnadze* said that he and the Secretary of State had agreed to hold further conversations on these issues, perhaps even a long session devoted exclusively to this complex set of problems.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said there had been no change on either side with respect to the Persian Gulf or Iran-Iraq war. On Afghanistan, both sides understood that strict compliance with the recent UN-sponsored agreement was essential. The behavior of Pakistan was cause for concern. Only yesterday, there had been a serious attack on Soviet troops. One soldier was killed, two were wounded, and three others were missing. This incident and others like it could not be overlooked by the Soviet Union, and served as the basis for deep concern.

With respect to Central America, *Foreign Minister Shevardnadze* said, no new elements had emerged. The US adheres to its position, thus blocking possible progress between us.

Some new element seemed present in Cambodia. The United States appears receptive to the idea of an early withdrawal of 50,000 Vietnamese troops, and wants to encourage the possibility of dialogue between the Vietnamese and Prince Sihanouk. With respect to Korea, the US perceives no change in the policy of the North. The Soviet side, in contrast, stated its belief that the leadership in North Korea was prepared for North-South talks on a broad range of issues now.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze then turned to bilateral matters. He said he would briefly summarize the situation by noting that many points of agreement had been identified and that serious discussion had taken place wherever disagreements still existed. Our negotiators had worked hard in a constructive and businesslike atmosphere, and further progress in this area was certainly possible, including new areas of cooperation. All of this is reflected in the Joint Statement.

General Secretary Gorbachev thanked the Soviet Foreign Minister for his presentation, and called upon Secretary Shultz to make any additional comments the US side felt necessary.

Secretary of State Shultz thanked the General Secretary and commented in extremely favorable terms on the work that had been done over the past two and a

half days. He said the experts discussions had produced good results, and that the work had gone on in the best of spirits. He said Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had provided a good outline of the results, and that he needed to go over only those points where our own perspective on issues was needed.

With respect to the draft Joint Statement, the *Secretary* called it a powerful document, containing important substance. The tonal language was just right. The Statement should provide an impetus both for our future work and the resolution of existing problems. The Secretary continued that the US side had discussed the additional political paragraph which Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had mentioned earlier, but that we believed the draft before us represented a clearer statement of where our current relationship stood. The Secretary then read the relevant paragraph from the joint statement:

“The two leaders are convinced that the expanding political dialogue they have established represents an increasingly effective means of resolving issues of mutual interest and concern. They do not minimize the real differences of history, tradition and ideology which will continue to characterize the US-Soviet relationship. But they believe that the dialogue will endure, because it is based on realism and focused on the achievement of concrete results. It can serve as a constructive basis for addressing not only the problems of the present, but of tomorrow and the next century. It is a process which the President and the General Secretary believe serves the best interests of the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union, and can contribute to a more stable, more peaceful and safer world.”

Secretary Shultz described this paragraph as a strong and powerful endorsement of the process that the two sides had set in motion. We believe we should stick to this paragraph and not make further changes.

Turning to the four-part agenda, Secretary Shultz talked first about START. We had made some headway on ALCMs and the question of verification for mobiles. Fruitful work had been done in these areas, and this was reflected in the Joint Statement. The Secretary then read the two relevant paragraphs:

“The two leaders noted that a Joint Draft Text of a Treaty on Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms has been elaborated. Through this process, the sides have been able to record in the Joint Draft Text extensive and significant areas of agreement and also to detail positions on remaining areas of disagreement. While important additional work is required before this Treaty is ready for signature, many key provisions are recorded in the Joint Draft Text and are considered to be agreed, subject to the completion and ratification of the Treaty.

Taking into account a Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms, the sides have continued negotiations to achieve a separate agreement concerning the ABM Treaty building on the language of the Washington Summit Joint Statement dated December 10, 1987. Progress was noted in preparing the Joint Draft Text of an associated Protocol. In connection with their obligations under the Protocol, the sides

have agreed in particular to use the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers for transmission of relevant information. The leaders directed their negotiators to prepare the Joint Draft Text of a separate agreement and to continue work on its associated Protocol.”

The *Secretary* said there had been no progress in Moscow on the issue of sea-launched cruise missiles. On defense and space, the discussions this week helped establish a better understanding of how we should go about clarifying the meaning of the statement at the Washington Summit. The talks did not, however, identify anything special to report to Ministers at this time. The *Secretary* noted that the issue of the Krasnoyarsk radar is still outstanding, and warned that this must be dealt with before the ABM review conference in October.

The *Secretary* asserted that the nuclear testing area represented the week’s major success story. Our negotiators, he said, should be congratulated for bringing in an agreement on joint verification experiments. The details of that agreement, which runs to 191 pages, shows that careful and detailed work between our two sides is possible and can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time.

With respect to chemical weapons, the *Secretary* said that good realistic language had been developed and included in the Joint Statement. This, in turn, provides a good basis for further work at the Geneva Conference in July, when complicated, sensitive verification problems will still need to be addressed.

The *Secretary* then referred to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze’s comments about missile technology, and called the agreement reached between the two sides on the notification of launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles and SLBMs an important new step taken during the Moscow Summit.

With respect to conventional forces, the *Secretary* said he would like to make three points. First, we needed to recognize that negotiations on these issues are among 23 countries, and not between the Soviet Union and the United States. Second, we needed to reach a balanced outcome in Vienna, a fact reflected in the Joint Statement. Finally, the two sides shared the view that conventional force talks should be autonomous from the regular CSCE process. The *Secretary* acknowledged Soviet interest in including something about naval forces in the conventional stability mandate. The US was simply not prepared to do this, he insisted.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze interrupted to say that the naval forces question was separate from the conventional arms mandate issue. The *Secretary* replied that nonetheless the United States is on the whole resistant to any discussion of naval forces. The *Secretary* continued by saying that Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had correctly identified aircraft as a major problem in the mandate discussions. The *Secretary* concluded by saying that on the human rights side of the Vienna meeting, we are now operating from a draft developed by the neutral and non-aligned countries. Work on this draft was going very slowly.

The *Secretary* then turned to regional questions. He declared that the two sides have had increasingly good discussions on specific issues over the past two

and a half years. Virtually every open question has been touched on in the working groups. Perhaps, suggested the Secretary, he would say a word about a few of the issues where new opportunities seemed to be opening.

One such area was Southern Africa. Here, we plan to press the parties to resolve their differences by late September, the tenth anniversary of the passage of Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibia. More work needs to be done, but it was important to keep this part of the US-Soviet dialogue going strongly.

Less dramatic progress had been produced in other areas. The US still favored a second resolution to follow-on Resolution 598, as a means of putting pressure on the participants to end the Iran-Iraq war. The *Secretary* claimed there had been good discussions on the Middle East, but that the complexity of the issues did not lend themselves to resolution in a short exchange. The issues themselves were of great concern to both sides. One example was the growing danger of chemical weapons and missiles in the area. The Chinese had recently sold weapons to Saudi Arabia in exactly the range the US and Soviets had banned from their own inventories.

The *Secretary* noted that the President had decided to send him back to the Middle East. Perhaps this was merely designed to show the Secretary's capacity for masochism. In reality, the trip was valuable as a means for keeping the peace process alive, something, the Secretary said, he believed was essential.

The *Secretary* then moved on to East Asia, where, he said, interesting developments had occurred in Cambodia. The Vietnamese should talk to Sihanouk, so that a process of national reconciliation can begin to be brought about. The Secretary said that without going into all other regional questions, it was perhaps worth noting that the South Koreans had proposed talks with North Korea, especially with regard to security at the Olympics. This was also a matter that Secretary Carlucci had spoken about to President Gromyko. We were also aware that SA-5 missiles had been installed in North Korea, in places that can reach Seoul. This then is a natural source of additional concern, as planning for the Summer Olympics proceeds.

The *Secretary of State* then turned to bilateral issues. He said these had not been considered at the very top level, but that discussion between the two sides had been smooth. The two sides were developing what we hoped would turn out to be long-lasting relations. We are particularly proud of the agreement reached to expand high-school-age exchanges, and of the agreement in principle to negotiate on cultural centers.

Secretary Shultz noted that Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had not commented on human rights, but that important work had also been done in this area. Even before the summit started, intensive discussions had begun on individual cases and institutional questions. The discussions had proven fruitful. Both sides can take pride in the substantial improvements that have been achieved and are reflected in the Joint Statement. The Secretary said that if one took a longer view and examined developments over the three-year period since Geneva, progress on human rights had come further than in any other area of our four-part agenda.

Still more work needed to be done but, compared to where we were when we started, “this was simply a different world.”

Secretary Shultz concluded his remarks by commenting briefly on the text of the Joint Statement. He noted that this had been worked out by Assistant Secretary Ridgway and Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh. It was a solid document, reflecting the fact that we are increasingly able to deal with problems and find solutions agreeable to both sides. The Secretary said he hoped the document could be approved and issued later today.

General Secretary Gorbachev asked the President to outline his attitude toward the two reports which had been given by the Foreign Ministers.

President Reagan said he agreed with what had been presented. A long list of problems had been outlined, but it was increasingly clear that these problems could be resolved. Opportunities abound for the two powers to correct difficulties around the world. We should not overlook these chances.

The *President* asked, “What problems do we really have? The mistrust between us needs to be eliminated.” Our two countries possess the ability to solve issues, and there are enormous humanitarian needs around the world. One such problem exists in Ethiopia. There, the President said, the government prevents volunteers from reaching the starving and the needy. We can put a stop to this. We can tell the government of Ethiopia that it simply can’t continue with the policies it is pursuing, that it must let the international agencies and volunteers distribute food and medicine to the needy.

The *President* then spoke briefly about the continuing horrors in the Persian Gulf. The loss of life in both Iran and Iraq was enormous. There was no prospect that the war would end soon and every prospect that, without our involvement, the killing and brutality would go on. Regional conflicts, said the President, have a way of drawing others in. Neither of us wants that, and we shouldn’t allow it to happen. On the contrary, it’s in our mutual interest to defuse tensions and promote regional stability.

The *President* then referred to Afghanistan. He said the settlement there was a tangible step in the right direction. He noted that General Secretary Gorbachev had said that the settlement could serve as a model for ending other regional conflicts. The President commended Gorbachev for his leadership in taking the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, and noted that it paved the way for the Afghans to settle their own future and enjoy genuine self-determination. The US, the President continued, favors a stable, neutral, and non-aligned Afghanistan, and we are prepared to work with you to ensure it.

The United States is prepared for the same spirit of cooperation in dealing with the problems of the Persian Gulf, the *President* said. The area is becoming much more dangerous with ballistic missiles and chemical weapons. The President added that together we have the unique potential for helping to bring a halt to the Iran-Iraq war. Recalling what he had said in Geneva, the President insisted the two powers had the potential for determining whether there is war or peace. The President suggested that the two superpowers opt for peace. The

President concluded his remarks by saying "Let's work together to make this a better world."

Secretary Shultz then addressed General Secretary Gorbachev and said jokingly that speaking for the bureaucrats around the table he wished to inquire whether the Soviet side approved the Joint Statement. If so, it could be readied for issuance later that afternoon.

The *President* stated his approval, but *Gorbachev* said he would like to make a few comments. He began by saying that the Joint Statement was a solid document, which accurately summed up our mutual efforts over the recent past. The document contained elements that record the progress made in the bilateral and regional areas. General Secretary Gorbachev noted that the art of politics is the art of the possible. In that spirit, he was ready to accept the Joint Statement if nothing more could be accomplished, but he asked to approach one subject again on the level of principle.

The *General Secretary* began by reviewing the ground, he said, we had covered together since Geneva. He said he had re-read the Geneva statement carefully. That document says specifically that the two sides had agreed to live in peace; that a nuclear war should not be fought and could not be won; and that the two sides would develop an agenda for the resolution of problems in four basic areas. This was an important global statement. Why could not a similar political global statement be arrived at today? What stands in the way of agreement on a statement which I handed the President on Sunday and which seems to have been rejected by the drafters of the Joint Statement?

What we called for in the Soviet draft, continued *Gorbachev*, was a political approach to problem-solving. What it said was that we all have to respect the rights of others. What is wrong with that? It follows from all we said together these past three days. Why can't we incorporate this basic idea into our statement? It would give the document a powerful political basis, Gorbachev said. It would strengthen the text, and suggest to the world that we have taken another important step forward.

We are the two major holders of nuclear weapons. We know from our own discussions that regional issues must be solved through political approaches. We know that we must live in peace, that there is no alternative to the political resolution of disputes. This is the will of both our people. They know that the sovereign choice of other people must be respected. Frankly, we have both said all these things in our own way on many previous occasions. You have made such statements; I can quote, Mr. President. We have made similar unilateral statements. Wouldn't it be much better if we could say the same thing together? It would help both of us and would send an important signal to the entire world.

General Secretary Gorbachev continued by suggesting that he and the President had reached tentative agreement on Sunday on such a statement. Gorbachev recalled that he had handed the text of his suggested paragraph to the President in English, that the President had read it and said he liked it. I think his exact words were, "I respond positively to this." I think, said Gorbachev, that the President's

wishes should be respected. Can we not, asked Gorbachev, simply make a correction in the text to include our paragraph, and the entire statement would then be ready for issuance?

General Secretary Gorbachev then turned to Secretary Shultz and said, "George, this is a good statement (referring to the Joint Statement), but it can be made better. The President, in fact, was the first in Geneva to make some of the statements I referred to earlier. Can we not proceed to use the language I suggested to the President on Sunday?"

Secretary Shultz then pointed to the objectionable phrase "peaceful co-existence" and to other unacceptable phraseology in the draft paragraph.

General Secretary Gorbachev responded adamantly, "We have already removed the phrase you objected to (peaceful coexistence), although we don't believe it is a bad phrase. What is it in the text that you are against? I see the President is hard put to find any faults. What do you say? Isn't it better that we put our thoughts on this subject together to create a new and powerful political statement?"

Secretary Gorbachev then turned to Assistant Secretary Ridgway and with a smile said, "As the English say, women are the second civilization. You are the only representative of that civilization here. The President had agreed to this paragraph on Sunday. What is in it that is not acceptable to you?"

At this point, *Secretaries Shultz and Carlucci* pointed out other difficulties in the Soviet language, and explained that there were at least four or five phrases that carried political baggage that the US did not favor.

General Secretary Gorbachev turned to Defense Secretary Carlucci and said, "Now Frank has gotten involved in this! All right, we understand your objections to certain words, but we have already developed a second formulation which I discussed with the President. All we are asking for is a statement that confirms there are to be political solutions, not military solutions, to international problems. The statement represents an effort to develop a political guideline, and the Soviet side would be happy if you could agree in principle to a statement that says this. Such a text would improve the Joint Statement and make it a more powerful document."

General Secretary Gorbachev asked that the American side reflect on his comments for a few moments while he went on to say a few things about regional issues. First, the Soviet Union was quite serious in wishing to go on record in favor of changing the way regional conflicts were resolved. The American side could be sure that the Soviets would cooperate in a constructive spirit in the resolution of problems around the world. We will not act on our own, continued Gorbachev, in a way which does not consider American interests or the interests of our own allies and friends. Soviet policy would be based on realities, and this would provide a sound basis for working together. Gorbachev added, "The hand of Moscow will be a constructive hand."

The first success in this policy was Afghanistan. *Gorbachev* said this was a complex issue. The choices before us were difficult and the decisions we took will not be easy to implement. But Afghanistan is now a thing of the past. We

have reached our agreement. Let's untie the Afghanistan knot and use it as a basis of untying other regional knots.

Gorbachev observed that the world was looking to see if we two can work for "real reconciliation on the basis of a balance of interests." The General Secretary said that he would not like to see things come apart in Afghanistan. The Soviets had begun to implement the agreement that was reached. There were, of course, many problems and complications. Pakistan was a problem. So, too, was the idea of a different coalition government. The Soviet side was not against a new political coalition and was willing to cooperate in its selection, but the possibilities from the Soviet side were limited.

What *General Secretary Gorbachev* said he feared were developments in the other direction, namely, the creation of a fundamentalist, Moslem government. He stated energetically that Soviet troops continued to be fired upon; so has the Soviet embassy in Kabul, and Soviet garrisons still in the field. If this continued, *Gorbachev* insisted, the Soviets will have to respond and make adequate adjustments. Both of us will be the losers if the agreement does not go into effect smoothly.

We need to cooperate, *General Secretary Gorbachev* insisted. If we don't, if we each act only on the basis of our own interests, we won't be able to achieve anything—anywhere.

The *General Secretary* agreed that the Iran-Iraq war was also a major test. He said that, in the abstract, the completion of a second resolution was acceptable, but that "we must be careful not to push Iran into a corner." The General Secretary said that the Americans had had a long-term relationship with Iran but that Iran was a Soviet neighbor and a serious problem. The General Secretary concluded by saying, "We must be firm, flexible, and constructive. We are ready to cooperate."

The *General Secretary* then turned to a discussion of the Middle East peace process. He said there was the beginning of convergence and the development of good, common ground between us. There was a general understanding of the need for an international conference, but the requirement still existed to bring our views together on the nature of such a conference, which could not simply be an umbrella with no influence on the outcome. To be sure, the two Superpowers could not impose a solution on the Arabs. We cannot insist they accept what they do not want. The General Secretary suggested that bilateral talks or trilateral talks would be required. We need to bring our views together on Arab participation. We also need to know what Palestinian self-determination means to the US. We should both be prepared to push the parties toward a compromise. The Soviet side is ready to do its part, and once the conference convenes, we will be prepared to consider the regularization of our diplomatic relations with Israel.

In the Middle East, only by cooperating together can a solution be reached, the *General Secretary* insisted. Without such cooperation, no solutions will be possible.

With respect to Southern Africa, the *General Secretary* said he welcomed the conference that had recently taken place in London and he had only praise for US

mediation efforts. On this subject, the US seemed to be taking a more realistic approach. There were clearly possibilities based on the well known resolution (presumably 435) which provided for the independence of Namibia. There also seemed to be new opportunities in Angola which the Soviets were ready to talk about cooperatively with the United States.

The *General Secretary* then turned to the question of Ethiopia. He noted that the Soviet Union was providing relief assistance in the form of food and economic aid. He said the Soviet Union lacked the capacity to deliver a political ultimatum to the Ethiopian government. This was not, in any case, the Soviet method. Moreover, the Soviets did not believe the Ethiopians were dodging their responsibilities to their own people or preventing relief assistance from reaching the needy.

With respect to Central America, *General Secretary Gorbachev* said it looked as if the US was holding up progress. Nonetheless, there had been interesting developments in recent months. In this connection, the General Secretary said, he was willing to reaffirm what he had said in the White House in December, namely, Soviet readiness to discuss arms supplies to the region. The Soviet Union was willing to refrain or limit assistance to police arms or non-offensive weapons. The Soviet Union was willing to act with the United States, but the US seemed uninterested or unwilling to work cooperatively. The General Secretary added that the Soviets would not interfere with US initiatives, but that these initiatives and current American policy will not be successful.

The *General Secretary* insisted he was somewhat perplexed by the American position on Korea. He said, as far as he could understand, the North Koreans were ready to negotiate. Talks could begin right away. It was the United States who objected to a process of accommodation. In contrast, the North Koreans were ready for a process of settlement, including eventual reunification of the country.

The *General Secretary* said similar possibilities for making progress existed in Cambodia. The Vietnamese have now taken a very important initiative, a step that again demonstrates the willingness for cooperation which exists in the Socialist camp.

The *General Secretary* said that this summed up what he wanted to say about regional issues. His conclusion was that many possibilities for fruitful cooperation and constructive interaction existed. The two sides needed merely to grasp the chance. Neither could dictate solutions. Each had to accept the requirement for political settlements. The approach must be on the basis of a balance of interests. The Soviet Union is ready to be an active partner in this process. He said Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze should continue to work together in reaching for compromise. Their consultations should be intensified, along with a continuation of expert discussions. There are important contributions we can make together, if we proceed to work cooperatively.

President Reagan suggested that the Gorbachev presentation was a little one-sided. He agreed that the two sides could play an important role in maintaining a

peaceful world, but the facts and the history of the regional conflicts could not be set aside so simply. The problem of Angola was certainly one area where history could not be ignored. The President then traced Angolan developments from the end of World War II until the time Portuguese colonialism ended. The Western hope was that the Angolan people would come together and create a government based on democracy. What actually happened was that one faction within Angola appealed for outside help, which led eventually to the entry of 40,000 Cuban troops in the country. Another faction (UNITA), under a popular leader named Savimbi, remained in the field. The President said that Savimbi's only goal was the establishment in Angola of a government in which people could choose their own destiny. The result, however, has been a civil war lasting more than a decade. Outside foreign troop assistance to one side or another in Africa had to stop.

The *President* then recounted the history of the Korean problem, recalling that US involvement came under the aegis of the United Nations banner after the North Koreans had attacked the South. Today, the line established during the Korean War still exists, and, as far as we know, the North Koreans have not given up their wish to control the entire country.

The *President* then turned to the history of Nicaragua, pointing out that the previous dictator (Somoza) had agreed to step down when the Sandinista movement promised in writing to the Organization of American States that it would institute democratic processes in the country. The Sandinistas had promised a free press, free labor unions, freedom of religion and a full, pluralistic society. Yet, when they took power, they began to exile and execute some of their own leaders and repress the population rather than institute the democratic reforms they had promised. No one elected the present leadership in Nicaragua, and the promises the Sandinistas made in writing were never carried out. It was under these conditions that the contra revolution arose, and that US assistance to them began.

The *President* concluded by saying that, if we and the Soviet Union are to work together, we cannot act in ways that do not allow people freedom of choice. For example, the Nicaraguan people must be given the opportunity to set up the democracy they thought they had fought to achieve.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he would keep his response to this presentation brief. In general, he said, the American assessment as to the cause of regional problems was at variance with Soviet assessments. If we go back and talk about history, he said, there will be no way of resolving current problems. This was certainly true in Angola and Central America. We must search for solutions, he insisted, on the basis of political methods and a balance of interests between us. If the Americans are ready to cooperate, we are ready to work with you; otherwise, we can wait.

We are in no hurry in Nicaragua, since pluralism already exists, *General Secretary Gorbachev* asserted. There are something like 15 parties. We have sent no Soviet advisors, and we cannot be considered responsible for what has occurred. At the same time, we cannot on our own cancel the will of the Nicaraguan people.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that he would like to sum up the discussion in this way: there are promising situations on many regional issues. We can develop a cooperative approach and strive to reach agreements which can be of assistance. This won't be easy or necessarily quick. The United States cannot solve regional problems itself. There are simply dozens of Arab interests that need to be considered. There are endless problems in Africa. There is a complex situation in Indochina. But good prospects are opening up, and the Soviet Union is ready to work with the Americans in searching for answers.

President Reagan said, "Yes, perhaps if we worked together, things could be accomplished." But in Nicaragua, we are closer to the scene, and we believe we have a better grasp of the situation. The President then recalled meeting a Nicaraguan whose ears had been removed by the Sandinistas, and used this as evidence of the cruelty and brutality of the current regime in Managua.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he was aware that the facts in Central America were often terrible but that Somoza had been no less cruel or harsh than the present Nicaraguan government. Indeed, the terrible situation that prevails in these regional conflicts should act to push us towards constructive results.

The *General Secretary* then said the discussion had to be brought to a conclusion. The most meaningful part of the President's visit to Moscow was about to end. Tonight, there would be a ballet, another short meeting in the morning and the press conferences. There was no value in trying to develop points we could make together at the press conference; each of us was free to say what he wishes. The Soviet assessment is that the Summit has been a major political event, where progress has been made on both bilateral and international issues. I trust your assessment will be somewhat along these lines. The General Secretary thanked the President for the effort made during the summit for the progress achieved and for the extensive discussion and detailed work that had been undertaken. I would appreciate it, however, continued the General Secretary, if the President could look again at the political statement, which he was shown on Sunday, to see whether he could not agree to it as it would give the summit a character and intrinsic importance it might not otherwise achieve.

President Reagan said he did not want to be the skunk at the picnic. The discussions had been useful and productive. The relationships which had developed were friendly and natural. We believe that the Joint Statement, as it was written and agreed, is a sufficient support to the developing political process between us, and it is all that we think is needed.

General Secretary Gorbachev responded actively, saying that the President had the choice, but seemed unwilling or reluctant to exercise the authority that was clearly his. "Should we record," asked the General Secretary rhetorically, "that the Americans would not agree to the paragraph because of George Shultz or Frank Carlucci? Are they the intransigent parties? Is one of them a revisionist? If not, perhaps we need to look for a scapegoat elsewhere. Perhaps, Ambassador Matlock or Assistant Secretary Ridgway? But let us not move in this direction. Rather, let us both carry our discussions to new heights so that your successor

will realize that we made the maximum effort and that our results were good and effective.”

President Reagan said that it was his view great progress had already been made. There was no reason to suggest there was disagreement because this would disappoint many people around the world.

General Secretary Gorbachev said it was only his thought that we ought to end this Summit on the most positive note possible. There had been long and sharp discussions but he could certainly agree there was no reason to end on a note of confrontation. But what was wrong with the language which the Soviet side had proposed? “Tell me, Mr. President,” the General Secretary suggested, “that you will be able to accept this text after all.”

Secretary Shultz insisted that the Soviet language made the American side uncomfortable, and that it contained phraseology which we found difficult to accept. In our view, we had taken the original Soviet language and reshaped it into a form we can endorse. We think the result is the strong, positive statement, now contained in the joint text.

At this point, *Gorbachev* suggested that the American side would perhaps want to caucus separately and reexamine the Soviet paragraph. He recalled that the Soviet side had already removed the language that the Americans had considered unacceptable, including the phrase “peaceful coexistence.” He then repeated his request that the American side huddle together and reconsider the Soviet language.

The plenary recessed at this point, and the two sides huddled briefly, whereupon the *President* decided again not to accept the Soviet text. He and Secretary Shultz walked over to the side of the room where General Secretary Gorbachev and his advisors were standing and told the Soviets that, “we prefer to keep the Joint Statement as agreed on Tuesday evening.” There was a brief further discussion lasting some two minutes, during which the *General Secretary* tried to argue, but when he saw that he was making no headway, he quickly reversed course and agreed to the Joint Statement text as drafted in the Working Group.

The meeting adjourned at this point, and all the participants walked out of the room together to the ceremony in which the INF documents of ratification were exchanged.

[Source: Ronald Reagan Library, obtained through FOIA F97-004/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 64: Notes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session
“On Reagan’s Visit to Moscow”

June 6, 1988

In this report to the Politburo on his meetings with Reagan, Gorbachev has little to show as far as results—no significant breakthroughs and no treaties signed. His main hope, quick progress on START, also did not materialize. Looking back, Gorbachev can only point to the importance of Reagan’s presence in Moscow, meeting with ordinary people and appreciating Russian culture. He stresses that during the summit, U.S. citizens could see the Soviet Union on their TV screens all day long, and that “[t]he ordinary American has seen the ordinary Russian.” The Soviet leader emphasizes the importance of “the human factor” once again in bilateral relations. In his memoir, Gorbachev would note that the most important result of the Moscow summit was Reagan’s statement during his Red Square stroll that the Soviet Union was no longer an “evil empire. ... It was another time, another era”⁴⁹—words that essentially signified the end of the Cold War.

Gorbachev: Our prognosis was completely right. Reagan’s visit has once again shown that the only correct policy is a principled and constructive one, and based on realism. Only this kind of policy brings results. The president has proven himself to be a realist. He was able to see the processes taking place on our political front.

While he was still in Washington, he said that one must study the culture of a people. But at that time he was still looking at us through the artificially strung-up human rights conception. Here he was able to get in touch with the people.

During his visit, Americans could see our way of life, the lives of regular Soviet people, on their TV screens 24/7. The very fact that the Soviet Union was “present” on American television in this scope is already a modern phenomenon. In addition to that, the Russian people were very friendly to the American president in the streets of Moscow and wherever he appeared. The ordinary American has seen the ordinary Russian.

The discussion of strategic and conventional weapons, and the entire issue of disarmament, had an advantage against this background. The change in the tone of Western propaganda was characteristic. Nobody accused us of frustrating or suppressing the problem of conventional weapons anymore. There is a new motif now: “What’s the rush?” Against the background of openness, the operation for the president to meet our dissidents, which was probably organized by the American embassy on purpose, was not only a blank shot, but to some extent turned against those who thought it up.

⁴⁹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 302.

Everything that happened in Moscow should be very carefully considered. And our scholars should thoroughly work through everything related to it. Overall, a new turn in Soviet-American relations has taken place.

Despite all his prejudices, the president was able to look at things realistically, and he spoke honestly of his impressions. He was not embarrassed to correct his previous objectionable conclusions.

Therefore, the human factor, which we regard so highly in foreign policy for a good reason, has played its essential role.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Notes of Anatoly Chernyaev. Published in Chernyaev, Medvedev and Shakhnazarov, eds., V Politburo TsK KPSS, p. 388. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 65: Memorandum from Arbatov to Gorbachev

June 1988

This memorandum to the general secretary from the influential Georgy Arbatov provides an after-action assessment of the Moscow summit and the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. Arbatov points to the significance of the summit as being an opportunity for the “discovery” of the Soviet Union by America and the West and the dispelling of the enemy image. He outlines the broad arms control agenda that remains, but cautions Gorbachev that during the last stages of the electoral campaign in the United States it will be unrealistic to expect serious progress. Arbatov clearly believes the Reagan administration has exhausted its potential to take serious steps on strategic or conventional weapons. In one part of the memorandum, he carefully suggests that it might be time for the Soviet Union to undertake some unilateral initiatives on conventional weapons in Europe, such as significant reductions in tanks, which would impress European public opinion and make speedy progress with the new U.S. administration more likely.

About the Results of the Moscow Summit and Their Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy and Soviet-American Relations.

As experience shows, the final results of events such as the Soviet-American summits become apparent over a more or less extended period of time. So far, we can only talk about preliminary results. Among them, the following are the most significant:

First of all, the summit brought substantial political and diplomatic results. It is important that we did not allow any breaks in the dialogue, even though it was possible and even probable due to the U.S. political calendar (the electoral campaign, the “lame duck” state—according to American political terminology—in which the outgoing administration now finds itself). Thanks to the summit, the year 1988 did not fall out of the process of normalizing Soviet-American relations. To the contrary, it already became an important marker in their development, which helps ensure continuity: both most likely presidential candidates are simply forced by the logic of events to speak positively about Soviet-American relations, about disarmament, and other important issues on the agenda. Thus, it is as if they are “taking the baton” from Reagan. Furthermore, preparation for the summit, the summit itself, and the subsequent realization of those agreements achieved or outlined there, do not just cement the constructive changes in Soviet-American relations, but also give them a new impulse for further development in all areas—disarmament, resolution of regional problems, and improvement of bilateral relations. As a result, by the end of the 1980s there will be a serious agreement, which in and of itself will bring definite stability.

The Moscow summit should be seen symbolically as the completion of a certain stage in Soviet-American relations and in American foreign policy. Ronald Reagan,

who in his first term as president spoke in favor of conducting a confrontational policy toward the USSR, in a way drew a line through the policies of the past with his visit to Moscow, thereby helping to open a new page in relations between the USA and the Soviet Union. This is an important lesson for American foreign policy. It shows that efforts to return to the Cold War's most critical times are unrealistic. In the foreseeable future, this will likely positively affect formulation of U.S. policy toward the USSR. This presents a serious argument in favor of moderate forces in the debate that has been going on for a long time now within the USA, about what represents the normal state of Soviet-American relations—the Cold War or coexistence.

It is also necessary to emphasize that apart from its impact on the USA, the summit—in terms of “material” political results—could have great importance for Europe. Our whole plan for resolving the problem of conventional armed forces and armaments is centrally important for NATO and for Western Europe first and foremost. For the first time, this plan was presented publicly with such clarity and with such convincing persuasiveness. As a matter of fact, it answers the most important fears and concerns of European states. Until now, all our proposals to this effect were hushed up, and the Americans, by refusing to include any joint statement on this issue in the final communiqué of the summit, have just confirmed that it was no accident. All things considered, here we delivered a sensible blow, and many American specialists who participated in the summit recognized it mainly as us “throwing the ball onto the Western side of the field.” The USA and NATO for decades taught the public of Western countries to believe that resolution of the issue of conventional weapons in Europe comes down to “Soviet unwillingness” to deal with it. Now it has become clear that the whole business is deadlocked by the Western position. This [development] shifts the struggle around this problem onto a different plane, which we should make use of.

Second, the summit has unusually large ideological importance. Its most obvious result (it is possible that it will be its main result) is that it helped America and the West discover, as no other event before it, the character, scale, and meaning of the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. This relates to the internal aspects of *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and democratization, as well as external ones—the new thinking in the sphere of foreign policy, our new, more flexible approaches, open-mindedness and so on. In this sense, the summit delivered a very forceful blow to the “image of the enemy,” and it could become a sort of “medicine” of long-term impact, continuing to improve the USSR's image abroad for a long time, especially if it is supported by new real actions. This delivers a blow to the most sensitive part of the entire “Cold War” structure, essentially to its starting assumption.

Even those events planned by Reagan as direct propaganda (meeting with dissidents, meetings with religious public figures) were in the West mainly perceived as confirmation of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the USSR, [which is] objectively against our propaganda [and] in our favor. This confirmation of many things we have been trying to prove with hundreds of articles and statements happened on its own during the summit. There has never been such a discovery of the Soviet Union for America before the Moscow summit.

Perhaps most importantly, the summit showed America and the world the overwhelming intellectual superiority of Soviet policies, especially since this superiority was not emphasized by us, but became clear on its own. Among its expressions was our position that we do not respond according to the “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” principle, and do not allow ourselves to be dragged into excessive polemics, but in some cases gave appropriate responses to unfriendly actions by the Americans.

The Moscow summit will undoubtedly have long-term significance in several areas. One of those is alignment of political forces in America and, most likely, the West as a whole. The fact that the chief author of the “empire of evil” formula, the main American proponent of confrontation—Ronald Reagan—stated publicly that he has reconsidered his former position and has admitted its inappropriateness through his statements at the end of, and after, the summit, delivered the most powerful blow to American conservatives and proponents of the “Cold War.” It is even more important because this change in Reagan’s personal position goes along with substantial objective changes in American society, including growing economic and social problems directly or indirectly related to the strengthening of the arms race and the administration’s “imperial” adventures. All this together robs the right-wing forces of one of their main arguments—that they are the most patriotic and the best defenders of U.S. interests against the “communist threat.” Whoever comes to the White House after Reagan, he will not be able to talk about the USSR as an “evil empire” any longer; he will have to take into account not just the successes, but also the big losses of the Reagan administration. As far as public opinion is concerned, we will see a strengthening belief that the time has come for comprehensive change in the overall structure of Soviet-American relations, [as well as] support for transferring them to a normal business-like course (65 percent of American respondents already believe this).

Normalization of Soviet-American relations in the context of economic deterioration and social problems in the USA pushes the American elite and society as a whole in a favorable direction—toward concentrating on their own internal affairs (which increases similar possibilities for us, too). This became apparent during the Washington summit, when, according to many Americans, Gorbachev turned out to be very popular in America because, among other reasons, he was telling America what they wanted to hear—about how existing hostility, which forces us to make huge material sacrifices, is not necessary, that relations could be changed.

Some conclusions and suggestions follow from what was said above:

It seems we broke out of the crisis of Soviet-American relations we reached in the beginning of the 1980s. However, this should not conceal the fact that their further normalization began to slow down.

The summit has particularly shown that the Reagan administration has mostly depleted the reserve of initiatives and concessions that it can make in the existing political and ideological framework. Taking this into account, the Reagan administration no longer has enough political will, power, or decisiveness to complete work on the treaty aimed at reducing strategic nuclear weapons, or to move

forward in negotiations on a number of other important issues. It is especially so because any new steps toward disarmament and normalization of relations are met with resistance not only by the far right, but also by more influential circles of the political elite who set the U.S.'s foreign policy course for decades and are now frightened because they feel that the structures of world politics developed during the "Cold War" years could now be in danger. As a result, they will try slowing the real development of relations in the name of "caution" and "realism."

Such an approach, naturally, does not correspond to our interests and goals. On the contrary, we should use political stagnation, which has developed in the USA, to continue developing our initiatives [and] political offensive.

On the American front of our foreign policy, however, we have to start from the assumption that Reagan, in the remaining months of his tenure in the White House, will be more and more constrained. We should not exclude the possibility that he will try to get a fifth summit; however, there is a very slim chance that he could ensure the completion of work on the treaty on strategic offensive weapons before the end of the current administration.

In connection to this, our propaganda should abstain from excessive optimism and high expectations. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that objective opportunities for faster progress in the negotiations do exist. Such formulation of the issue would put pressure on the administration and serve as a reminder that the ball is in America's court, pushing both candidates to speak on this issue, which would increase the priority of Soviet-American relations in the electoral discussion.

As far as negotiations are concerned, we should probably start from the assumption that resolution of any particular problem will make negotiations with the next administration easier. Here, however, we should make one caveat: resolutions should not result from excessive concessions from our side, especially on issues on which opinions are split even in America. First of all, this relates to the issue of preserving the Treaty of 1972 on limiting ABM systems. Here, any further concessions seem unacceptable. They would only foster opposition to us among important Senate groups, the Democratic Party, and even among moderate Republicans. And besides, [such concessions] would undermine the importance of the agreement itself, because the future administration could not "give back" a concession we already made, regardless of its views on any particular issue. This is exactly what experts in the Dukakis circle said to us during our conversations, expressing his foreign policy consultants' request that we should not make any new concessions on the ABM Treaty. (Dukakis, by the way, through his experts, is already trying to feel for the possibility of meeting with M.S. Gorbachev after his nomination at the Democratic Convention. This is not an easy question, but a sensitive one; we need to think about it. On Dukakis's part, they also expressed a wish for meetings and contacts with our prominent politicians, scientists and public figures, who would visit the USA after the Democratic Convention.)

In order to further develop the political initiative we captured under these conditions, which suggest that our relations with the USA are slowing down, it is

important to strengthen our policy in other areas (such strengthening would help us in terms of influence on America as well).

It is hard to overestimate the importance of developing our relations with Western Europe at this stage. Here we should above all use conventional weapons as a factor [in improving relations]. Many serious observers note that one of our most serious accomplishments at the Moscow summit was that the West, for the first time, was truly informed about the new Soviet plan for reductions in conventional weapons (e.g., exchange of information with verification, including on-site inspections, elimination of asymmetries, reductions by 0.5 million men, changes in the doctrine, structure and the deployment of the armed forces in such a way as to remove the capability of conducting offensive operations while preserving defensive capabilities). Making this plan public by announcing it during the summit was a useful step, but now it is important not to allow them to forget about our proposals.

This is even more important because this plan opens a very promising way to pull Western Europeans into a process of genuine disarmament. Obviously, great organizational and diplomatic difficulties exist on the road to realizing our plan (i.e., the problem of coordinating positions within NATO, the tradition of negotiating within the CSCE framework, and so on), and according to Western experts, an agreement here could be achieved in no less than three to four years. But the more energetic and persistent we are in insisting on the realization of this plan (and NATO conservatives are scared by it precisely because it could be realistically implemented), the more noticeable change in Europe will be.

[...]

Now is an appropriate time for unilateral action—without any connection with the [Moscow] summit (otherwise anything we do could be interpreted as propaganda), but as a thought-out political action. We could talk about some measures in the military sphere to start with, which would be inevitable when—sooner or later—our plan on conventional weapons is accepted by the West, and which are reasonable both from the military-political and from the economic points of view. One such possibility is reducing the number of tanks (by getting rid of [older models]) while emphasizing that we are doing it in anticipation of future agreements on eliminating asymmetries. The same [argument] could be made about, for instance, our river-crossing equipment (pontoon bridges and the like), the excessive quantity of which allows NATO to label our strategy as being offensive; to some extent this could be applied to artillery as well. With the help of such “material evidence” we could better illustrate for the Western public the truth about our intentions and proposals. We should not exclude the possibility that a time will come for reviving the idea of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing.

[...]

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Chapter 5

THE GOVERNORS
ISLAND SUMMIT,
1988

The last official meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev—after four spectacular summits that commanded world attention at Geneva 1985, Reykjavik 1986, Washington 1987 and Moscow 1988—took place on an island in New York harbor on December 7, 1988, during the Soviet leader's trip to deliver his now-famous United Nations speech announcing unilateral arms and troops cuts and—to many observers—declaring the ideological end of the Cold War. This Reagan-Gorbachev finale also marked the beginning of the next series of superpower summits, since President-elect George H.W. Bush participated in both the private lunch and the plenary session at Governors Island, a Coast Guard base chosen for the easy security arrangements.

The most abbreviated of all the summits—cut even shorter than planned by news from Soviet Armenia of a massive earthquake causing thousands of deaths, precipitating Gorbachev's return—the Governors Island moment also featured the largest gap of all the summits between what the Soviets were proposing on arms control and what the Americans were remotely able or willing to accept. In fact, the Soviet unilateral cuts announced at the U.N. found no resonance at all in either the lame-duck president, or his vice president of eight years who had just won the White House a month earlier. Those elections—and Bush's political need to cater to the hard-line forces on the Republican right—had helped freeze U.S. policy in 1988 and prevent any reciprocation from Washington to Gorbachev's overtures.

Many observers applauded Bush's restraint at Governors Island, his declining to upstage the outgoing president, and his sense of protocol—not even inviting his designees as secretary of state (James Baker) or national security adviser (Brent Scowcroft).¹ But in retrospect, we can see not only prudence and caution at work, but also the reality that Bush's new team was distinctly more skeptical of Gorbachev's motives than President Reagan or Secretary of State Shultz were.² In fact, the transition from the Reagan to the Bush administrations at the end of 1988 and beginning of 1989 amounted to a transition from doves to hawks.³ And a full year would pass after Governors Island, until the Malta

¹ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 371.

² Shultz commented in his memoir that Bush had “agreed to be present as vice president, though he did not seem to welcome this event.” *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1106.

³ For extended discussion of the doves-hawks transition, see Thomas Blanton, “U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989,” in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 58–63.

summit in December 1989, before the Bush administration would come around to the realization that Gorbachev's ideas were very much in America's interest as well. The keenest observers on each side saw the missed opportunity clearly: U.S. ambassador to Moscow Jack Matlock entitled one book chapter on this period "Washington Fumbles," while top Gorbachev aide Anatoly Chernyaev went even further, heading his memoir chapter on the period before Malta as "The Lost Year."⁴

According to the evidence from the Soviet side, Gorbachev explicitly prepared the U.N. speech as a means to speed up arms reductions, engage the new American leader, and end the Cold War. After the successful signing of the INF Treaty at the Washington summit in 1987, the Soviet leadership was prepared for very quick progress on the strategic offensive weapons treaty (START). Building on the personal understanding and chemistry between Reagan and Gorbachev, the Soviets were counting on signing START with Reagan, before the U.S. presidential elections of 1988. Having made substantial concessions on short-range missiles (abandoning the Oka, for example) and on verification (allowing snap on-site inspections) for the INF Treaty, Gorbachev was signaling Reagan throughout the spring of 1988 that he wanted to push for faster progress on START. But Reagan's conventionally-minded advisers, particularly Frank Carlucci at the Defense Department and Colin Powell at the White House, took a deliberately go-slow approach which undercut Shultz, who saw how significant arms reductions could address fundamental U.S. national security interests. Political aides at the White House were reluctant to make any new chancy moves during an election year; and candidate Bush, intent on protecting his right flank during the primary season especially, provided a sea-anchor against any arms control movement. And despite Reagan's own belief in nuclear abolition, the conflict-averse character of his management style meant that he never confronted such contradictions in U.S. policy, and instead fell back on the theatrical set pieces he had enjoyed so much at Geneva and Reykjavik and Washington.⁵

The U.S. military also stalled START. The Navy insisted on keeping its submarine-launched nuclear cruise missiles out of the START reductions, even though that class of weapon was far more threatening to the U.S.—with its many coastal population centers—than to the inland Soviet Union. Both the Navy and the Air Force resisted advances on verification, refusing to agree to on-site inspections even after the Soviets had adopted the previous U.S. position insisting on such measures. Thus did the U.S. military provide an ironic coda to the long-time Reagan proverb of *doveryai, no proveryai*, except that it was the Soviets who were trusting, and asking to verify, while the Americans balked.⁶

⁴ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 177; Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 201.

⁵ See FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 417, for one of many appreciations of Reagan's theatrical interest in the summits.

⁶ For the inside story on the U.S. military's short-sightedness, see Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 277–279.

The stalling provoked intense frustration in Gorbachev. During the summer of 1988, the documents show, the Soviet leadership gradually realized that the START Treaty would have to wait until the next administration came to power in Washington. Therefore, the top priority for Soviet foreign policy was not to lose the momentum and to hit the ground running with the new administration. For example, the head of the USA and Canada Institute, Georgy Arbatov, in his June 1988 memo to Gorbachev emphasized the importance of being prepared for the new administration—not slowing down the pace of negotiations, keeping the initiative, and building a base of support in Europe—thus keeping the pressure on for comprehensive cuts in conventional arms. Arbatov included the idea of eliminating the asymmetries between the two great military alliances in Europe, which meant a reduction of Soviet troops by at least 500,000.⁷

The idea of such conventional reductions was not so radical: much earlier, in April 1986, Gorbachev had proposed large conventional cuts as a follow up to his January 1986 nuclear abolition proposals; and in June 1986, the Warsaw Pact formally approved an offer to NATO that started with mutual reductions of 100–150,000 troops and ended with overall Pact forces at a level about 500,000 lower, or 25 percent of existing figures. (It would be six months before NATO even responded.⁸) Gorbachev repeatedly applied the phrase “radical reductions” in speeches mentioning conventional forces—with the direct implication of asymmetrical cuts on the Soviet side—including in his July 1987 acceptance of the “global double zero” on INF.⁹ He also brought it up during the Washington summit—to absolutely no response on the U.S. side, perhaps because the Americans, having insisted for years that the NATO allies build up their forces, dreaded the negotiating process going in the other direction, and feared the U.S. Congress would go even further in the name of burden-sharing and budget reductions. But in 1986 and 1987, and even in the summer of 1988, the Soviet side still saw such a plan only in the context of a process of mutual, negotiated reductions of forces in Europe—rather than the unilateral initiative the idea became by the end of the year.

As the Soviet documents on the Moscow summit demonstrate, the real focus of Gorbachev’s top aides during the middle of 1988—especially once they realized the Moscow meeting would be theater rather than contract negotiations—centered on the 19th Party Conference scheduled for the end of June.¹⁰ No such conference had been held since Stalin died, although party congresses occurred

⁷ Document No. 65.

⁸ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 596.

⁹ FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 420.

¹⁰ Anatoly Chernyaev’s diary, for example, contains dozens of entries about the Party Conference, but only one paragraph about the Moscow summit. Chernyaev writes “We took a break from Volynskoe-2 due to Reagan’s visit” and then “immediately after Reagan we re-located to Novo-Ogarevo (to prepare the party conference).” See <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB251/28.pdf>.

every five years as the most authoritative expression of Communist Party policy. *Perestroika* architect Aleksandr Yakovlev led the team drafting the resolutions for the conference, and they turned out to be, in Jack Matlock's words from briefing President Reagan at the time, "nothing short of revolutionary in the Soviet context" and a refutation of "the most entrenched principles of the Soviet state structure."¹¹ Later in 1988, this "new thinking" would take center stage in Gorbachev's U.N. speech. But aside from Ronald Reagan's own repudiation during the Moscow summit of his previous "evil empire" rhetoric—"I was talking about another time, another era," Reagan told reporters¹²—there was little resonance in U.S. policy from the radical new directions in Moscow.

By fall 1988, Gorbachev was looking for new initiatives to jumpstart progress with the next American administration. In September it became more clear that Bush would likely win the White House; and Anatoly Dobrynin, the former ambassador to Washington, now a key Central Committee official, wrote Gorbachev suggesting the general secretary meet with the president-elect as early as possible after the election, preferably during the planned December visit to New York for the U.N. General Assembly session. Dobrynin suggested that Gorbachev address the U.N. and do it in a way that would reach out to the new administration and to American public opinion.¹³ In October, Gorbachev decided to follow this advice: address the U.N., tout the new thinking on the world stage, meet with both Reagan and the president-elect, and turn the previous Soviet positions on conventional force reductions into a unilateral initiative for maximum impact. Gorbachev told his aides his concept of the U.N. speech was "anti-Fulton, Fulton in reverse"—a comparison to Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946 at Fulton, Missouri.¹⁴ Whereas Churchill's address marked for many the beginning of the Cold War, Gorbachev wanted his to signify the end of the Cold War. He wanted to offer deep Soviet reductions in conventional forces as proof of his policy, because this would address the Western concern Margaret Thatcher (among others) had educated him about—the Soviet advantage in tanks and troops and the history of Soviet interventions in Europe (1953, 1956, 1968).¹⁵ This unilateral move, Gorbachev judged, should build trust and open the way for rapid progress with the new American administration; he would meet with President Reagan and his successor immediately after the address.

But first the Soviet leader had to deal with his own internal politics, including military resistance to the idea of unilateral cuts, and the conservative voices

¹¹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 289 and pp. 295–296.

¹² For an eyewitness description, see Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, p. 299.

¹³ Document No. 66.

¹⁴ Chernyaev notes of Gorbachev meeting with advisers, October 31, 1988, Document No. 31 in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 311–312.

¹⁵ See Gorbachev's Politburo remarks on May 8, 1987, about the Thatcher meeting, Document No. 12 in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 249–252.

inside the Politburo who had dared to challenge the new thinking earlier in 1988 during the so-called “Nina Andreyeva” affair.¹⁶ The Soviet record shows Gorbachev quite well aware of the potential opposition and trying to think through sensitive issues such as what to do with the personnel being withdrawn from Eastern Europe (living conditions in East Germany being a cut above the tents that would be awaiting the troops back in the USSR). Ultimately, Gorbachev seems to have decided to keep decisions about the U.N. speech limited to a very narrow circle of advisers, and he never presented to the Politburo the actual numbers for the unilateral cuts he intended to announce. Instead, in what Chernyaev in his diary termed a “historic” conversation at the November 3, 1988, Politburo session, Gorbachev held the unilateral character of the cuts until the very end of the discussion, after he had argued for the necessity of such steps, complaining that “[i]f we publish how matters stand, that we spend over twice as much as the U.S. on military needs, if we let the scope of our expense be known, all our new thinking and our new foreign policy will go to hell. Not one country in the world spends as much per capita on weapons as we do, except perhaps the developing nations that we are swamping with weapons and getting nothing in return.”¹⁷

Ultimately, Gorbachev’s speech on December 7 explicitly endorsed the “common interests of mankind” (no longer the class struggle) as the basis for Soviet foreign policy and, significantly for Eastern Europe, declared the “compelling necessity of the principle of freedom of choice” as “a universal principle to which there should be no exceptions.” Most surprising to U.S. and NATO officials were Gorbachev’s announcements of the 500,000 reduction in overall Soviet forces (out of 5 million) and significant withdrawals from Eastern Europe (50,000 troops, 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, and 800 combat aircraft). Just three weeks earlier, the U.S. intelligence community consensus (a Special National Intelligence Estimate) posited that the Soviets “prefer to negotiate with NATO to achieve mutual reductions of conventional forces” because “it makes more sense to trade force reductions, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces.” The SNIE went on to suggest that “the Warsaw Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to the Soviets could take years—and might not even be possible”—a judgment that would become obsolete within days, yet would live on into the new Bush administration as the deputy director of Central Intelligence, Robert Gates, would move to the White House as deputy national security adviser. Just in case, however, the authors of the SNIE mentioned that “for political effect, the Soviets may also take unilateral initiatives” such as withdrawing some troops from Hungary. But they completely misjudged the troop cuts, claiming that the “Soviets may attempt to portray force restructuring as a unilateral force reduction” but really this is “intended

¹⁶ See the previous chapter in this volume on the 1988 Moscow summit.

¹⁷ Document No. 67.

primarily to make units more effective for prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO.”¹⁸

At the very moment Gorbachev was speaking at the U.N. on December 7, the top three U.S. intelligence analysts on the Soviet Union (Doug MacEachin, Robert Blackwell, and Paul Ericson) were testifying in a closed-door session of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s special task force on the USSR. MacEachin opened his testimony by saying “in about 15 minutes or so we may find out if one of my analytical judgments is going to turn out to be correct,” referring to his prediction that Gorbachev will have to cut the proportion of Soviet resources that go to the military. At the same time, MacEachin disparaged the “plausible but totally unfounded story of very large cuts”; but later he mentioned that “Blackwell just went down the hall to watch some” of the U.N. speech on television, and some 36 pages into the transcript MacEachin mentioned the “news bulletin” of the astonishing 500,000 troop cut announced by Gorbachev—10 percent of overall Soviet forces. Ericson commented that this is “analysis on the fly.”¹⁹

Most striking is the way this testimony illustrates the rifts within the U.S. government between Gorbachev skeptics like Robert Gates and the new national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, on one side, and the career analysts like MacEachin on the other. MacEachin remarked that “if Gorbachev is successful he will cause major social displacement in the United States” because “[t]here are not many homes for old wizards of Armageddon, and it is kind of like old case officers trying to find employment.” And MacEachin offered a true confession in an extraordinary passage that demonstrates how prior assumptions about Soviet behavior, rather than actual intelligence data points, actually drove intelligence findings:

Now, we spend megadollars studying political instability in various places around the world, but we never really looked at the Soviet Union as a political entity in which there were factors building which could lead to the kind of—at least the initiation of political transformation that we seem to see. It does not exist to my knowledge. Moreover, had it existed inside the government, we never would have been able to publish it anyway, quite frankly. And had we done so, people would have been calling for my head. And I wouldn’t have published it. In all honesty, had we said a week ago that Gorbachev might come to the UN and offer a unilateral cut of 500,000 in the military, we would have been told we were crazy. We had a difficult enough time getting air space for the prospect of some unilateral cuts of 50 to 60,000.

¹⁸ Special National Intelligence Estimate JI-16-88 CX, “Soviet Policy during the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe,” November 16, 1988, published in Fischer, ed., *At Cold War’s End*.

¹⁹ U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Special Task Force on the Soviet Union, classified hearing, December 7, 1988, declassified in 1991 during confirmation hearings of Robert Gates to be Director of Central Intelligence.

After MacEachin admitted that the Soviet agreement for on-site inspections under the INF Treaty were far more “intrusive” than the Americans “were willing to accept,” Senator Bill Bradley (D-New Jersey), who presided over the classified hearing, remarked on meeting some U.S. military intelligence officers in the European Command who had become “disoriented and depressed” because after spending their careers just trying to get into the Soviet space, now “you’re giving me the key and saying walk in, there’s an easy chair, take a look around and do you want a beer?”²⁰

Reaction in the West to the speech ranged from disbelief to astonishment. *The New York Times* editorialized: “Perhaps not since Woodrow Wilson presented his Fourteen Points in 1918 or since Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill promulgated the Atlantic Charter in 1941 has a world figure demonstrated the vision Mikhail Gorbachev displayed yesterday at the United Nations.”²¹ U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) called the speech “the most astounding statement of surrender in the history of ideological struggle,” while retired general Andrew Goodpaster, a former NATO commander and top aide to President Eisenhower, described Gorbachev’s announcement of unilateral troop cuts as “the most significant step since NATO was founded.”²²

Little of this world-shaking impact was evident in the highest-level U.S. government reaction. At the Governors Island “private” meeting just an hour later, President Reagan remarked that “he had had a brief report on it [the address], and it all sounded good to him.” At the Governors Island plenary session with media present at the beginning, Reagan answered one question by saying he “heartily approved” of Gorbachev’s troop cuts, and that the U.S. might even do “some adjustments... if what Gorbachev called for left us with superiority, for we do not seek superiority.” President-elect Bush then drew laughter when he answered that “he supported what the President had said.”²³ After the media left, Bush commented to Gorbachev only that “he had seen Gorbachev’s speech on TV, and he seemed to have had a full house, with every seat filled.” Bush did not even mention the U.N. speech in his brief private meeting remarks to Gorbachev—no reaction to what Gorbachev had proposed, no questions about the timing of the reductions, no follow-up on the specifics, and not even a sense of what informed observers like Moynihan and Goodpaster were seeing. Instead, Bush remarked only that he “would like to build on what President Reagan had done” but “he would need a little time to review the issues” and “revitalize things by putting in new people.”²⁴

But the new Bush advisers were more than skeptical of Gorbachev. In his subsequent memoir co-authored with Bush, national security adviser Brent

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *The New York Times*, “Gambler, Showman, Statesman,” December 8, 1988.

²² For details on the reaction, see Blanton, “When Did the Cold War End?” p. 184.

²³ Document No. 70.

²⁴ Document No. 69.

Scowcroft dismissed the U.N. speech as if he had not been listening. He described his staunch opposition to any early summit with Gorbachev in these strikingly obtuse terms:

Unless there were substantive accomplishments, such as in arms control, the Soviets would be able to capitalize on the one outcome left—the good feelings generated by the meeting. They would use the resulting euphoria to undermine Western resolve, and a sense of complacency would encourage some to believe the United States would relax its vigilance. The Soviets in general and Gorbachev in particular were masters at creating these enervating atmospheres. Gorbachev's U.N. speech had established, with a largely rhetorical flourish, a heady atmosphere of optimism. He could exploit an early meeting with a new president as evidence to declare the Cold War over without providing substantive actions from a “new” Soviet Union. Under the circumstances which prevailed [at the beginning of the Bush administration], I believed an early summit would only abet the current Soviet propaganda campaign.²⁵

Ironies abound in this statement. The Soviet evidence shows that substantive accomplishments in arms control were very much on the table and available at the very beginning of the Bush administration. These included the START agreement for 50 percent reductions in strategic nuclear weapons—with on-site verification—that Bush would not actually sign until July 1991, and the withdrawn deployments of tactical nuclear weapons that Bush would not order until September 1991. The alleged “rhetorical flourish” combined substantive actions by the Soviets with declaratory policy that less hidebound thinkers than Scowcroft well understood meant the end of the Cold War. The only “enervating atmosphere” was the one inside the new Bush administration, which would tie itself in knots undertaking a strategic review that would produce nothing of substance during the very months in 1989 that Eastern Europe was transforming itself—and the world.

The American ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock, as one of the few Reagan appointees kept on by Bush, tried to preserve some momentum. The day after Christmas, he asked to see Politburo member and head of the International Commission Aleksandr Yakovlev, and assured the latter that there would be continuity in U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union under new President George H. W. Bush. Matlock praised the new President's seriousness and professionalism, compared him favorably to Reagan in terms of experience in foreign policy, including being personally involved in developing the policy line toward the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, Matlock stated bluntly that the United States would not be ready with its approaches on strategic arms negotiations by February 15 (the deadline for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan), and that the new President needed time for an in-depth study and analysis of these issues. The

²⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 46.

disappointed Yakovlev emphasized especially that the Soviet leadership was hoping for “enhanced continuity” and resolution on arms control issues and regional conflicts and that Gorbachev’s goal in his meetings in New York was precisely to prevent a long pause in U.S.-Soviet relations after the new administration comes to power. Yakovlev also expressed his frustration with the U.S. position on the settlement in Afghanistan: “the United States so far has not shown any desire to actually encourage the Afghan settlement.”²⁶

Gorbachev’s own report to his Politburo after Governors Island showed he saw first-hand the Bush reluctance to engage. Gorbachev said, “I believe with full certainty that this administration is not ready for a new, serious turn in relations with the USSR....” He went on, “when I managed to tear myself away from Reagan, I spoke to Bush about this indecisiveness. He snapped back: you must understand my position. I cannot, according to American tradition, come to the fore until a formal transfer of power has taken place.” Gorbachev told the Politburo, “This I understand” but “[w]e should take into account that Bush is a very cautious politician. They say that his idiosyncratic feature is ‘natural caution.’ It is inside him. We should see it. And what can make Bush act? Only [the threat] of a loss of prestige for the administration. So we need [the sorts of] circumstances that we have now created through our initiatives, to promote this process.”²⁷

Anatoly Chernyaev subsequently noted that “[m]uch has been written about the impression that Gorbachev made on the world in his U.N. speech. But we also have to consider the impact on him of the world’s response to his speech.... Having received such broad recognition and support, having been ‘certified’ a world class leader of great authority, he could be faster and surer in shaking off the fetters of the past in all aspects of foreign policy.”²⁸ Regrettably, exactly those “fetters of the past” continued to restrain the highest levels of the George H.W. Bush administration from meeting Gorbachev even half-way after Governors Island, and arguably postponed dramatic reductions in nuclear weapons, fissile materials, and conventional armaments, to the detriment of international security today.

²⁶ Record of Conversation between Aleksandr Yakovlev and Jack Matlock, Yakovlev Fond, State Archive of the Russian Federation, Fond 100063, Opis 2, Delo 148, translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.

²⁷ Transcript of CC CPSU Politburo Session, December 27-28, 1988, Document No. 35 in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 334–335.

²⁸ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 203.

Document No. 66: Memorandum
from Dobrynin to Gorbachev

September 18, 1988

Here the long-time former Soviet ambassador to Washington and future head of the International Department of the Central Committee, Anatoly Dobrynin, advises Gorbachev on upcoming policy toward the United States. Dobrynin perceptively explains the dynamics of the U.S. presidential campaign and suggests that Gorbachev try to meet with the president-elect as early as possible, even before he is inaugurated, in order to preserve the continuity and momentum of bilateral relations. The best time and location for such a meeting would be in New York, Dobrynin suggests, especially if Gorbachev will be making an address to the U.N. General Assembly. The address could then provide a major stimulus for a new start in the relationship. This is precisely what Gorbachev proceeds to do, although the groundbreaking significance of the speech would apparently elude senior American leaders at first.

Mikhail Sergeyevich!

For the remaining part of this year you, as we know, have quite an intense schedule of meetings with leaders of a number of non-socialist countries: with the chancellor of Austria, prime minister of Spain, president of Brazil, chancellor of FRG, and prime minister of India. A meeting with Mitterrand, whose request it would be expedient to satisfy, has also been tentatively suggested.

Therefore, our active [policy], especially in the European direction (taking into account your subsequent return visits to these counties next year) will find itself persuasively implemented.

However, you probably should not let American affairs drop out of your vision either: the electoral campaign in the USA, which will culminate on November 8 with the election of a new president, is entering its decisive stage. In connection with this, it seems extremely important to seek mutual understanding with the new president early on before his approach to the Soviet Union is fully formulated.

From here, the issue of an *extraordinary step* arises: a possible meeting with the president-elect before his official inauguration as president on January 21 of next year. Such a meeting could be organized in a natural fashion if you were to deliver an address in New York at the session of the U.N. General Assembly in the beginning of December (which in and of itself would be a step with great political resonance, including an impact on America on the eve of a new administration).

At that time you could also have a “farewell meeting” with Reagan, which would be useful from the standpoint of influencing American public opinion; we

should not discount the influence of this still popular president on the population even after his departure from the White House.

Dobrynin
18 September 1988

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 67: Notes from a CC CPSU Politburo Session

November 3, 1988

In this diary entry, Chernyaev records a “historic” discussion at the Politburo—the first time Gorbachev presented his decision to announce deep unilateral cuts in his upcoming U.N. speech. Gorbachev is “clearly nervous” because of the radical nature of the steps he is about to undertake, and because of the presence of Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, who will have to approve the cuts. The general secretary makes an unprecedented push for cutting Soviet military expenses and publishing the numbers as a means of building trust with the West. He tries to impress upon the Politburo the unreasonably high cost of maintaining the armed forces at current levels and the need to withdraw from Eastern Europe. But he must walk a fine line—making the conservatives feel that they are part of the decision-making process, yet leaving them out of decisions about the actual scope of the cuts. Therefore he never mentions actual numbers. Only at the end does he indicate that the cuts will be unilateral—a huge break with past Soviet positions, which always demanded reciprocal cuts in conventional weapons in Europe. Chernyaev predicts this will be “an event that may well take second place in importance after April of 1985”—referring to the party plenum when the policy of perestroika was formally announced.

November 3, 1988. Politburo.

Today is an historic day. After the planned Politburo, M.S. became more serious and clearly nervous, he began to speak on the subject that he “tried out” during his main talk three days ago with Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Falin, and Dobrynin. This was about his trip to the U.N. in December.

M.S. [Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev]: Comrades Ryzhkov and Maslyukov, as well as other colleagues, are asking me a question. This question is also in letters I receive. Very recently, at a meeting with young Komsomols I once again came across this question: they ask me, why do we need such a big army? People have been troubled by this question for a long time.

We approached this theme at the 19th Party Conference. In the report, in the theses, and in the resolution we said that we need quality, not quantity.

Now the moment has come to make a major decision. We are taking little steps, like the agreement to liquidate medium and short-range missiles [INF] and some other things. But that does not change the principal nature of the situation. E.A. [Shevardnadze] comes across this every day... Today Shultz talked about it again. The military doctrine we announced differs from what we are actually doing in military building. If we publish how matters stand, that we spend over twice as much as the U.S. on military needs, if we let the scope of our expenses be known, all our new thinking and new foreign policy will go to hell. Not one country in the world spends as much per capita on weapons as we do, except

perhaps the developing nations that we are swamping with weapons while getting nothing in return.

We said that we are ready to publish data and push the Americans on this account, but if it really comes to that, what are we going to do? But that's not the point. We will not solve the *perestroika* objectives if we leave the army as it is: the best scientific-technical forces, the best production funds, reliable supplies... The little Komsomols are right, why do we need such a big army?! Six million people! Somebody told me that they are proposing to lower the conscription age to 17. (*Maslyukov* inserts a comment: *Yagodin* came to me with this proposal, but I refused to sign it). What are we doing? We are depleting the intellectual resources of our best young forces! Who is going to conduct *perestroika*? (*Yazov*: by November 9th I will present a proposal on all these questions... *M.S.* probably gave him an assignment immediately after the conversation).

In the GDR we have [stationed] a powerful group of armored forces, plus pontoon forces. When all this hangs over them, how can they believe that our doctrine is defensive?!

There is also the question of reducing (for now reducing) our presence in socialist countries. Today *E.A.* told me about his talk with *Grósz*. Right now the issue is not very acute. But it could become severe under a situation like the one in Hungary right now. And then we won't be leaving voluntarily, we'll be driven out of there... *Dmitri Timofeevich!* (*Marshal Yazov*) They say your troops are stationed on territory that contains a historical monument of world importance?

Yazov: The territory contains a famous church. A reconnaissance battalion and a medical battalion are stationed there, but we are already moving them.

M.S. Thank God! At least the monument is safe! (Laughter)

So comrades, we need to think through this issue and discuss it with our friends. I propose that the Defense Council considers everything. Then we will come back to this at the Politburo. Does anybody have any questions?

(Everybody nods)

Ryzhkov: (very tensely) I feel the need to say that if we do not do this we will not fulfill the 13th five-year-plan, and there can be no talk of an improvement in the standard of living. Whatever government you place here, it will not resolve this problem [without reducing military spending].

M.S.: If we all agree and if we make some major decisions, then I plan to announce this in my speech at the UN.

Everybody: Yes, yes...

M.S.: This will make a great impression... after the agreement to liquidate middle and short-range missiles, and after Afghanistan, this action... the world will see that it is not empty talk, these are policies. We will advance the entire process. I would put it this way: with all the significance this has for [our] impression on the world and for the advancement of our policy of peace, the most important aspect is still *perestroika*. *Nikolay Ivanovich (Ryzhkov)* is right: we will not succeed with *perestroika* without this action.

There is no question that we should be militarily powerful. But we should achieve our power through scientific advancement, through technology, through highly qualified cadres and modern organization of our troops. Planes, missiles... but not like Karmal, who sucks us dry but doesn't produce results. We cannot be weak. This is the axiom. But we need to be powerful for security's sake, not for the purpose of intimidation.

M.S. also said that he is talking about *unilateral* reductions, not about the material going into negotiations with the Americans and the mandate of the Vienna meeting.

This will be the evidence that I was present at an event that may well take second place in importance after April of 1985.

Additionally, the Politburo discussed food supplies to Moscow. On this count there was total mess and nonsense, both from Zaikov and Mesyats. We did not reach anything, even M.S. could not think of something.

There was also talk of "Memorial..."²⁹ Kapto already started "to act," he wrote a denunciation. But M.S. took the following approach: it's your own fault, you decided to create a memorial to the victims of Stalinism and once again nothing got done... So people decided to do it themselves, except now they have exceeded the limits... (Kapto is already charging it with the desire to become an "alternative political structure." M.S. stifled that idea and said—study it!)

We discussed Solzhenitsyn. Frolov, Shakhnazarov and I wrote him (Gorbachev) a "protest" against Chebrikov and Medvedev's note, which says that "we should uphold the decree that strips him of his citizenship as a traitor of the Motherland..."

M.S. understood our point of view: yes, he is an enemy, irreconcilable and staunch. But he is an ideological enemy, and we do not try people for their beliefs in a legal state. So "think about it." The authors of the note sat there, steaming. Chebrikov tried to interject that "he did betray..." (i.e., there was an action). M.S. just hemmed at that.

[Source: Anatoly Chernyaev Diary Manuscript, donated to the National Security Archive. Translated by Anna Melyakova.]

²⁹ A non-governmental organization formed in 1987. Memorial was established in order to find information and build a memorial to the victims of Stalinist repressions. [Footnote in document]

Document No. 68: Special National Intelligence Estimate “Soviet Policy during the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe”

November 16, 1988

This Top Secret estimate, known as a SNIE, produced just two weeks before Gorbachev’s landmark speech at the U.N., demonstrates how much the Soviet leader took the U.S. government by surprise with unilateral cuts in Soviet ground forces and withdrawals from Eastern Europe. The intelligence community consensus reflected here posits that the Soviets “prefer to negotiate with NATO to achieve mutual reductions of conventional forces” because “it makes more sense to trade force reductions, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces.” The SNIE goes on to suggest that “the Warsaw Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to the Soviets could take years—and might not even be possible”—a judgment that would become obsolete within days. Just to cover all bases, however, the authors of the SNIE mention that “for political effect, the Soviets may also take unilateral initiatives” such as withdrawing some troops from Hungary. Yet they completely misjudge Gorbachev’s purpose, asserting that the “Soviets may attempt to portray force restructuring as a unilateral force reduction” when it is really “intended primarily to make units more effective for prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO.”

12. SNIE J1-16-88 CX, November 1988. Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe (Key Judgments only)

We judge that the Soviets and their allies have a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control:

- Military:
 - To improve the correlation of forces and to reduce what they perceive as NATO’s capability to launch a surprise attack.
 - To impede NATO’s force modernization plans and to prevent or impede NATO’s deployment of advanced technology weapons.
- Political:
 - To demonstrate the “new thinking” in Soviet foreign and domestic policy.
 - To appeal to foreign and domestic public opinion in a generalized way while adding to Moscow’s over all arms control posture and enhancing the USSR’s image as a trustworthy, rational player in the international arena.
- Economic:

- To reduce the threat from NATO and thereby reduce the urgency on the part of the Soviet Union to match or better NATO's high technology modernization programs.
- To make it politically easier to allocate economic resources within the Soviet Union from the defense sector to the civilian sector to carry out *perestroika*.

We believe the Soviets and their allies *prefer* to negotiate with NATO to achieve *mutual* reductions of conventional forces. Militarily, it makes more sense to trade force reductions, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces. However, the Warsaw Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to the Soviets could take years—and might not even be possible.

In the short term (up to two years), we believe the Pact will pursue a strategy aimed at reducing the West's perception of the Soviet threat in the expectation that this course will make it difficult for NATO governments to maintain or increase defense spending. The Pact will engage NATO in the Conventional Stability Talks and probably will introduce sweeping proposals for asymmetric reductions.

We predict that, when formal negotiations concerning conventional forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone begin, the Warsaw Pact will quickly present a formal version of its public diplomacy position—and might even table a draft treaty very early in the negotiations. It will probably insist on an initial discussion of data regarding asymmetries between the two sides' forces and will probably suggest establishing a working group on data.

The Warsaw Pact states will *not* accept the current NATO proposal, which in effect calls on the Pact to take gigantic cuts in tanks and artillery for minor cuts on the NATO side so that there is parity between the Pact and NATO. For example, this would mean the Pact would have to withdraw or destroy about 25,000 tanks while NATO would withdraw or destroy about 900 tanks.

Outside of the negotiating process itself, for political effect, the Soviets may also take unilateral initiatives:

- We judge the Soviets could garner significant political gains in Western Europe at tolerable risks by unilaterally removing some of their forces from Eastern Europe, especially all from Hungary. The evidence on Soviet timing and conditions is insufficient to predict with confidence when and whether a withdrawal announcement might be made.
- Given the West German concern about short-range nuclear-capable forces, it is possible that the Soviets might make a gesture by unilaterally withdrawing some short-range ballistic missile launchers from Eastern Europe; however, we judge the likelihood of such a move to be low for the period of this Estimate.

- The Soviets may attempt to portray force restructuring as a unilateral force reduction: however, we judge that the ongoing restructuring of the Soviet ground forces is intended primarily to make units more effective for prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO.

We judge that, among our NATO Allies, France will be the most resistant to potential Soviet gambits, with the United Kingdom a strong second. Of the major partners, the Federal Republic of Germany will be the most responsive to such ploys, because of its strong desire to reduce defense spending and to reduce the chance of the country becoming Europe's nuclear battleground. The challenge for the United States and the rest of NATO will be to continue the ongoing NATO modernization, while at the same time negotiating on a possible agreement with a more sophisticated adversary in an environment where the public perception of the Warsaw Pact threat has been softened significantly.

[Source: Released by CIA for 1999 conference at George H. W. Bush Center for Presidential Studies, Texas A & M University, published in Fischer, ed., At Cold War's End (CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999)]

Document No. 69: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan-Gorbachev, Private Meeting, Governors Island,
1:05 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

December 7, 1988

This poignant transcript of the last official meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev shows the two leaders essentially avoiding any substantive discussion of the momentous changes in Soviet policy Gorbachev has just announced at the United Nations. Instead, they wax nostalgic for their series of summits dating back to Geneva 1985, and Reagan presents the Soviet leader with an inscribed photograph of that meeting. Gorbachev is clearly eager to move forward with the president-elect, George H. W. Bush, who demurs that "he would need a little time to review the issues" (even after eight years at Reagan's right hand?), but "wished to build on what President Reagan had accomplished, working with Gorbachev." Ironically, Bush says he has "no intention of stalling things." He wants to "formulate prudent national security policies," but certainly intends "to go forward."

The President commented that there would be five waves of media representatives. *Gorbachev* responded that that was not the most difficult task they were facing. *The President* said the first wave would be Soviet and the last from international media. *Gorbachev* said each time they met the weather got better. *The President* replied jovially that we arranged that.

Turning to substance, *Gorbachev* said he hoped what he had said at the UN had not contained surprises. He had wanted to address the logical construction of what had been done in recent years, as a matter of real policy. This was their fifth meeting. It was not a negotiating session, but at the same time it was their fifth meeting, and it was special, taking place as it did in this group.

The President said it was a pleasure for him to commemorate their meetings. He well remembered standing in front of the house before the lake in Geneva, waiting for *Gorbachev* at their first meeting. Most of his people thought at the time it would be their only meeting.

Gorbachev said it was true that they had much to remember, and much to look forward to as well. This was true not just in a personal sense. The most important thing they had done was to begin movement in the right direction.

Gorbachev commented that the Vice President was listening, but probably saying to himself "let them talk."

A media representative asked *Gorbachev* why he had announced troop cuts at the UN. *Gorbachev* replied that, as he had just told the President and the Vice President, what he had announced was a continuation and implementation of what he had first outlined on January 15, 1986.

Gorbachev said he appreciated what the President and he had accomplished in recent years. They had made a joint analysis, undertaken joint efforts, and taken real, specific steps forward. He had now outlined certain additional ideas that demonstrated the realistic nature of the policy and added to it. He had issued an invitation to work together, not just to the U.S. What he had said was grounded in common sense and experience.

A *journalist* asked him if he expected the NATO Allies, including the U.S., to reduce as well.

Gorbachev replied that he had made clear that these were unilateral steps, undertaken without reference to the Vienna mandate. He had been discussing the range of disarmament, humanitarian and economic questions with the U.S. and the Soviet Union's European partners. As for this meeting, it was not for negotiations; it resulted from his being in New York, and the President's and Vice President's invitation to meet on that occasion. He hoped it would be a useful meeting.

A *journalist* asked if there was opposition to the cuts in his country. *Gorbachev* said the answer was "no."

The President commented that *Gorbachev's* Russian "nyet" sounded a little like "yes." *Gorbachev* replied with a smile that the answer was still "no."

Referring to the camera lights, *Gorbachev* commented that they were between a burning fire and bright lights. The President said that as a veteran of television he had found that the lights can make you look twelve years younger.

Gorbachev replied that when he had landed at JFK and made his remarks to the press, he had been facing right into the sun, and it had been worse than TV lights.

Gorbachev asked why the island was called "Governors" Island. *The Vice President* replied that it had been given to the British governors for their use in colonial times, and the name had stuck. *The President* said it was now the headquarters for our Coast Guard, and they were meeting in the commandant's residence.

The President asked *Gorbachev* if he had ever told him about President Lyndon Johnson's remark concerning the press. Johnson had said that if he ever walked from the White House to the Potomac and walked out on top of the water, the press would report that the President could not swim. *Gorbachev* laughed, and said the President had indeed told him the story before.

After the media had left, *the President* said he had a little memento for *Gorbachev*. It commemorated the moment in Switzerland during their first meeting when they had stopped in the parking lot. *Gorbachev* thanked the President. *The President* asked if he could read the inscription, and *Gorbachev* assented. The President quoted the inscription that they had walked a long way together to clear a path to peace, Geneva 1985 – New York 1988. *Gorbachev* said those were good words, and he especially appreciated that they were written in the President's own hand; he thanked the President.

Gorbachev said that he would tell the larger group the same thing, but he wished to say here that he highly valued their personal rapport, and the fact that in a rather difficult time they had been able to begin movement toward a better

world. *The President* replied that as he left office, he was proud of what they had accomplished together. One reason for it was that they had always been direct and open with each other. *Gorbachev* agreed.

The President said they had accomplished much. There was much yet to do, but they had laid a strong foundation for the future. What he had done had been based on the values that have guided our hand, the values we subscribe to in this nation. That commitment to promoting trust and confidence remained. He asked the Vice President if he had something to say.

The Vice President said he did not, except to comment that the picture the President had given Gorbachev was also symbolic of the distance the two countries had come. He did not get to be President until January 20, but with reference to the three year span since the picture was taken, he would like to think that three years from now there could be another such picture with the same significance. He would like to build on what President Reagan had done, as he had told Gorbachev when they had met at the Soviet Embassy, even before the Presidential campaign had gotten underway. He would need a little time to review the issues, but what had been accomplished could not be reversed. He wished to build on what President Reagan had accomplished, working with Gorbachev.

Gorbachev said he understood the Vice President's words as a very important assessment of what they had been able to achieve in the years just past. It seemed to him that the prospects for Soviet-American relations were good. He could only repeat what he had told the President on many occasions: the Soviets knew what a country the U.S. was, what its role in the world was, what its people were like. There was a lot of respect in the Soviet Union for the United States. They had cooperated together, and there were good prospects for this to continue.

Gorbachev said he agreed with Vice President Bush on the need to build on the assets the two leaders had piled up. There was a lot they could accomplish together. Here in this company, he wanted to say while they talked as friends that he would treasure the memory of all they had been able to do together in these last years. Certainly he agreed with what Mr. Bush had said about moving forward, and building on what had been achieved. But it was also proper that they try to add to it. *Gorbachev* said he knew Mr. Bush would become President Bush only in January. He would be bringing new people with him. Today, *Gorbachev* said, he was working with President Reagan. He did hope that the President would also treasure his memory of their joint work to solve problems that the whole world wanted to see solved.

The President noted that it was a tradition of their meetings that he come at some point to the subject of human rights. *Gorbachev* said the President would now be able to tell the press he had raised it again. *The President* said he was pleased to hear about the steps the Soviets had taken the week before on emigration and on jamming. He was pleased with the progress that had been made in the human rights field since their last meeting.

Gorbachev said he had presented certain thoughts in this regard in his UN address. *The President* said he had had a brief report on it, and it all sounded good

to him. As he had done previously, he would like to present a list of about half a dozen names of individuals he would like Gorbachev to look at. Accepting the list, Gorbachev commented that perhaps they had already left. *The President* said that would be fine, if true.

The President went on to say that we were all on Gorbachev's side concerning the reforms he was trying to make in the Soviet system. *Gorbachev* said he had lots of work and an interesting life. Their country had become a different one. It would never go back to what it had been three years before, regardless of whether he or someone else were leading it.

The President said he would be watching after he returned to private life, and cheering Gorbachev on. *Gorbachev* invited him to come to the Soviet Union as a private citizen. The President said that would be nice. *Gorbachev* said they would take good care of him. *The President* suggested they go in to lunch.

Gorbachev said he valued what the President and Vice President Bush had just said. He also wanted to continue on a consistent basis, without rushing. There was a lot to do together. He urged the Vice President to think about it. He had a little time in which to do so, although, on the other hand, it was already less than two months before he would become President.

Noting that he would be putting together a new team, *the Vice President* said this was not from dissatisfaction with those who were in the job now. Some of those might be leaving. Some cabinet members would stay on, others would not. The theory was to revitalize things by putting in new people. He believed that Gorbachev knew Jim Baker. He did not think he had met Brent Scowcroft, but he was well known to many people on the Soviet side. *Gorbachev* said he knew of him. *The Vice President* continued that others would be coming on board over the next few weeks. He would like Baker to continue what the President had done with Secretary Shultz: good and frequent contacts with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. *Gorbachev* said he thought that would happen. *The Vice President* said that Secretary Baker would obviously want to get together first with his colleagues in NATO, and then with Shevardnadze. They should get together with their people to decide on things that had not been resolved.

Gorbachev said he fully understood, and found it important that the Vice President was thinking in terms of tackling and deciding and solving problems. *The Vice President* said he had no intention of stalling things. He naturally wanted to formulate prudent national security policies, but he intended to go forward. He had no intention of setting the clock back; we wanted to move it forward.

The President suggested again that they go in to lunch. *Gorbachev* assured him and the Vice President that on the Soviet side there would be full and constructive cooperation. *The Vice President* added that he would have the additional incentive of having the President on the phone from California getting on his case and telling him to get going.

The President said he wished to remind Gorbachev of something he had said at their first meeting in Geneva. He was not sure he had told the Vice President about it. He had told Gorbachev that they were two men in a room together who

had the capability of creating the next world war, or the capability of bringing peace to the world. Now, all these years later, he thought it was evident that they had decided to keep the world at peace. *Gorbachev* agreed that it had all begun at Geneva.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Library*, obtained through FOIA F97-004 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 70: Memorandum of Conversation,
Reagan–Gorbachev, Luncheon Meeting, Governors Island,
1:40 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

December 7, 1988

Gorbachev has just been informed of a massive earthquake in Armenia. The conversation therefore starts with a discussion of the resulting destruction and loss of life, as well as the upcoming relief efforts, before moving on to arms control and bilateral relations. In this final conversation of a very brief summit, one can hear Gorbachev appealing directly to President-elect Bush for continuity in U.S.-Soviet relations. He praises Reagan for the cooperation they have achieved and jokingly suggests that the “president deserve[s] some kind of merit award for his knowledge of Russian proverbs.” Reagan also speaks highly about the changes in the Soviet Union since 1985. What is conspicuously absent from this conversation is any reaction to the U.N. speech of the kind Gorbachev has been hoping for. His goal for the speech was to set a new agenda based on bold, new unilateral proposals and to spark a similar initiative from the new administration. However, all that Bush has to say is that “he had seen Gorbachev’s speech on TV, and he seemed to have had a full house, with every seat filled.” He betrays no knowledge of the substance of the speech. Gorbachev repeats several times that the proposals he made were intended to make the new president’s life easier, and that the only thing he could not do was eliminate the U.S. budget deficit, but even deficits in both countries could be remedied if the two countries worked together. Gorbachev is forced to cut the meetings short and fly back to the Soviet Union to deal with the earthquake.

The President said they would again be facing five waves of press.

Gorbachev said he had just been told about the earthquake in Armenia. On the ferry over he had had a telephone conversation with Moscow. The earthquake had also affected Azerbaijan and Georgia. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, however, there had not been many casualties. But in Armenia there had been much destruction. It had registered 8.0 [on the Richter scale]. In Armenia Yerevan had not been hard-hit, but elsewhere there was lots of destruction, many losses of life, casualties. He had talked to Ryzhkov, who said one village had just disappeared. While he had been in the house on the island he had written a telegram to the people of Armenia. A government commission had been set up to assist people. Life was all things together, good and bad.

The President said that with tragedies like this you sometimes got the feeling you were being warned. We had recently had an earthquake in California. The Vice President asked if there were any estimates of lives lost. Gorbachev said there were not any yet, but they had heard they went at least into the hundreds. Shevardnadze commented that if a whole village was destroyed there would be

at least that many. The President asked if it were really true that a village had just disappeared into a hole in the earth. Gorbachev said it was. They would begin relief work with the military forces that were already there. The whole medical service would be used; eventually all services would be involved.

A media representative asked the President what he thought of Gorbachev's troop cut proposal. The President replied that it was not a proposal, but a decision. The same representative asked again what he thought of it. The President replied that he heartily approved of it. Another representative asked if the President would be doing the same thing. The President said some adjustments might be called for if what Gorbachev had announced left us with superiority, since we do not seek superiority.

A media representative asked the Vice President for his view. The Vice President said he supported what the President had said. Amid laughter, Gorbachev said that was one of the best answers of the year. The press had left, and the Vice President commented that at least they had gone away. In the quiet that followed, Gorbachev said that the press would probably say the company was not very talkative. It observed everything.

The Vice President commented that he had seen Gorbachev's speech on TV, and he seemed to have had a full house, with every seat filled. Secretary Shultz said those in the seats had been very attentive. Gorbachev said he had also noticed that when he was speaking, and asked himself whether it was a good or a bad thing. It was an unusual situation for him to have quiet when he talked. In the years of perestroika he had gotten used to having a response to everything he said.

The President said he had had the same experience recently, and then remembered that people were listening through earphones. He had asked himself whether they were really listening or not. Gorbachev replied that he had thought the same thing during his address. The Secretary commented that when he had finished the burst of applause was genuine.

Gorbachev said he wanted to stress that he was committed to what he said at the UN and in front of the house that they were in. If we had succeeded in moving forward in these last three years, it was only through common efforts, and that was the only way for the future too.

The media had now departed, and Dobrynin commented jovially that probably meant that dinner was over.

The President reported to the table that in the private meeting in the other room they had discussed some of the things that had gone into the changes of recent years. He and the Vice President had made it plain that they approved of those changes. What had taken place since 1985 in our relations had also improved relationships around the world. And there was more to come. He was pleased at the prospects for making more progress in all areas of our agenda. And, he noted, he had not said "dovieray no provieray" once.

Gorbachev replied that when people came to study the President's time in office, someone would try to count up how many Russian proverbs the President knew. Those he had heard from the President showed he had selected them very carefully.

Gorbachev went on to say that in the Soviet Union people were so busy that they had no time to analyze things, but in a larger context the President deserved some kind of merit award for his knowledge of Russian proverbs. People in the Soviet Union remembered the President's visit to their country very well. The President said he remembered it too; he had only warm feelings for the reception he had gotten from Gorbachev's people.

Turning to regional issues, the President said the Soviet Union's role was important, and we welcomed the role it had played in the process of achieving Namibian independence and the removal of foreign troops from Angola. He hoped we could work on other regional issues in the same way.

Gorbachev replied that it might be important for him to recall a conversation he had had with Shultz. They had been meeting on the eve of one of Shultz's visits to the Middle East with his plan. They had exchanged views, and he had said to Shultz that it was good the U.S. had come to the conclusion that the Middle East problem could not be solved without the participation of the Soviet Union. Now that the U.S. had reached that conclusion, the Soviets would make a constructive contribution in the Middle East, they were for constructive cooperation on all problems, including regional problems.

He wanted to make another general point, Gorbachev went on. He wanted the U.S. not to be suspicious about the Soviet Union on regional issues, suspicious that the Soviet Union was intriguing against the U.S. It was a good moment to make that point, with the Vice President there. When the Soviets talked about Asia and the Pacific, or did something there, it was not to harm the U.S. If they did something in Europe, it was not to create difficulties for the U.S., to weaken its links with Western Europe. His thought was that if both sides just continued as they had for decades, working against the other side, nothing good would come of it.

Perhaps the President had the impression he thought he was some kind of saint, Gorbachev continued. That was not the case; there were real contradictions between the two countries. But they had real interests in common as well. The problem was what to do, what conclusions to draw in this situation. His conclusion was that the two sides should continue along the same track. The Soviets saw no advantage to themselves in weakening U.S. security. They saw no advantage in causing an upheaval in the world economy. That would be bad for the U.S., but it would be bad for them too. Let us therefore move beyond the subject matter and the conditions of the 1940's and 1950's, Gorbachev said. We had been able to achieve something. And looking at both the President and the Vice President, he could say that continuity was the name of the game today. He was not building castles in the air. He was not operating on the basis of illusions, but of real policy.

We should therefore be able to work together on all regional problems in a constructive way, Gorbachev continued. If the next President had studies underway, and had some remarks or suggestions on these issues, he would like to hear from him. He might respond with some remarks or suggestions of his own. He especially supported the remark in favor of the tradition that Shevardnadze and

Shultz had been able to establish. He hoped no one would be offended if he said that the tradition he wanted Baker to establish with Shevardnadze was one that bureaucrats by themselves were not up to. All the forces we have at our disposal should be deployed to improving Soviet-American relations. He understood what the Vice President had said to mean that the Vice President understood the importance of the relationship between the two countries.

The President noted that there were still differences between them. Krasnoyarsk, for instance, was unresolved. At the same time, he thought they agreed on the need to wipe out chemical weapons in the future.

Gorbachev replied that he thought he had put an end to the Krasnoyarsk problem. It had been transferred from the military to the scientists. The task was to make things easier for the new President. Shultz had spent so much time on this problem, and as a result they had given it to the scientists.

The Secretary said he had listened to the portion of Gorbachev's address concerning Krasnoyarsk, and noted that the word Gorbachev had used had been translated as "dismantle." Gorbachev replied with a smile that he bet the Secretary had written that down. He said he could confirm the translation. It was another victory for the Secretary. The important thing was to make life easier for the next President.

The Vice President interjected that there were other areas he could do that for, if that was what he had in mind. Gorbachev responded jocularly that the Vice President was probably thinking what else he could ask for. The Secretary suggested helping end the budget deficit. Gorbachev said the Soviets could not solve our budget deficit problem, and we could not solve theirs, but working together could help with both.

[Source: U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA 200903790 by the National Security Archive (the Reagan Library did not have a copy until the Archive provided one from State files).]

Chapter 6

THE MALTA SUMMIT, 1989

One of the few high-level American officials to survive the transition from Ronald Reagan to George H.W. Bush (other than Bush himself), the U.S. ambassador to Moscow, Jack F. Matlock, Jr., also participated in both presidents' summits with Mikhail Gorbachev. So Matlock's judgment of the Malta summit carries the distinctive weight of first-hand comparative experience. He subsequently wrote, "Next to the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting at Reykjavik, [Malta] probably achieved more substantively than any other U.S.-Soviet summit meeting, even though no major agreements were signed."¹

Regarding Reykjavik's impact, Matlock clearly meant the effect on Gorbachev of Reagan's insistence on nuclear abolition, and the resulting reduction in the Soviet sense of threat and encouragement of an arms race in reverse, as evidenced soon after Reykjavik in the 1987 agreement to eliminate intermediate range nuclear missiles (INF). As for Malta, Matlock's assessment is actually a severe criticism of the Bush administration, which had declined to engage Gorbachev for almost its first full year—the Bush "pause," which Matlock described as "self-imposed lethargy" in Washington.²

Gorbachev had sought to engage president-elect Bush as early as the Governors Island meeting in New York in December 1988, but Bush demurred, instead launching a strategic review of U.S.-Soviet relations that cloaked the reality that the transition from Reagan to Bush was one from doves to hawks—that is, disbelievers in Gorbachev as a true reformer. Leading the hawks was national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, who had opposed the INF Treaty as destabilizing for Europe, and who brought to the White House his belief in the continuing Cold War, a commitment to "restoring" the credibility of nuclear deterrence, and a resentment of Gorbachev as a new iron fist inside a velvet glove who was simply fooling the world with his "enervating" propaganda. A retired Air Force general and nuclear traditionalist, Scowcroft meant to halt the leaps and bounds of arms control in the Reagan years, and saw cuts in nuclear weapons as inherently dangerous—raising incentives for "breakouts" and "bolts from the blue" first strikes, and reducing NATO's credibility against all those Soviet tanks.³

¹ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 272.

² *Ibid.* p. 200.

³ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 12–13, 115–117. In sharp contrast to Scowcroft's skepticism, the career CIA experts in the Office of Soviet Analysis predicted continuing Soviet defense cuts, an eagerness for conventional forces reductions, a willingness to be flexible on verification, and Gorbachev's commitment to "political leverage in-

Throughout 1989, judging by the candid memoir authored by Bush with Scowcroft,⁴ the White House mentality was marked by insecurity and anxiety over the general awareness that Gorbachev was more popular globally and had the initiative on proposing new departures in security policy—never quite recognizing that Gorbachev’s proposals might well be in the U.S. national security interest.⁵ Throwing out the “mush” produced by the so-called “strategic review,” Scowcroft seized instead on a four-page memo by his Soviet affairs aide, Condoleezza Rice; yet the very first point of the Rice memo focused on the “image” of U.S. foreign policy leadership rather than on any specific acts of leadership.⁶ When the President demanded some new initiatives for a big spring speech, the best Scowcroft’s aides could do was resurrect an Eisenhower-era proposal for “Open Skies”—totally obsolete in the age of spy satellites.⁷ When Secretary of State James Baker held his first face-to-face meeting with Gorbachev, in Moscow in May, the American felt “upstaged” by the Soviet announcement of a 500-missile cut in short-range nuclear weapons in Europe, rather than taking the offer and asking for more in a cascade of cuts.⁸

The Soviet short-range nuclear forces (SNF) announcement highlighted the dramatic contrast between the Gorbachev and Bush policies in the first half of 1989. For the Americans, enormous official energy went into their top priority of modernization—not cuts—of short-range nuclear missiles in West Germany. Fearful of the “denuclearization” of Europe, Scowcroft and the National Security Council staff generated dozens of memos and interventions with the Germans in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to persuade Helmut Kohl to go along with upgrading the 88 short-range Lance nuclear missiles (in bureaucratic jargon—FOTL, or “follow on to Lance”).⁹ Kohl, of course, saw only dead Germans in the event of Lance usage. He faced significant anti-nuclear protests from West Germans who felt the same way, and understood that there were plenty of U.S. submarine-based nuclear weapons to deter any Warsaw Pact attack. Despite repeated American invitations, Kohl’s top foreign policy aide, Horst Teltschik, cancelled out of a scheduled March visit to

stead of military strength to promote the USSR’s security.” See CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, “Moscow’s 1989 Agenda for US-Soviet Relations,” SOV 89-10012X, February 3, 1989 (Bush Presidential Library Copy).

⁴ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, see for example pp. 40, 43, 71, 78, 114.

⁵ For extended analysis of the Bush administration’s characteristic insecurity, see Blanton, “U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989,” in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*.

⁶ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 40.

⁷ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 71.

⁸ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 71; see also Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 67–68.

⁹ See, for example, Don Mahley Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Next Steps on SNF,” January 30, 1989 (Bush Library 2010-2911-MR, declassified June 22, 2012); Brent Scowcroft Memorandum for the President, “Short-Range Nuclear Forces and NATO’s ‘Comprehensive Concept,’” n.d. (Bush Library 2010-2914-MR, declassified September 13, 2012).

Washington on the SNF issue, and even Kohl ducked out on scheduled phone calls to Bush in April—much to the dismay of the Americans.¹⁰

For Gorbachev, who had overridden the strident objections of his military in 1987 to junk deployment of the new short-range Oka missile in order to clinch the INF deal, the Americans' Lance obsession was doubly objectionable, both heightening the arms race and avoiding serious discussion of short-range nuclear weapons—as the Soviet leader pointedly reminded Baker during the May Moscow discussion. Gorbachev specifically offered to withdraw all the Soviet nuclear weapons from “the territories of our Warsaw Pact allies, provided the U.S. reciprocates.” But the flustered Baker missed the moment, insisting that before talks could even begin, the Soviets would have to reduce their “advantage in tactical nuclear arms”—to which Gorbachev pointed out, counting air assets, “we are evenly balanced, but it is a terrible balance at a very high level.”¹¹

Gorbachev's frustration with the Bush “pause” and review of policy made the Soviet leader more than eager for a summit meeting, but he would have to wait until the very end of a most momentous year. In the interim, he raced to make his “new thinking” effective—in international relations by completing his promised pullout from Afghanistan on February 15, and even domestically, with the first free elections to the Supreme Soviet in March 1989. The Soviet leader campaigned for his idea of a “common European home” by visiting London (April), Bonn (June), Paris and Strasbourg (July), Helsinki (October), and even Rome to meet with the Pope (November), before he would see Bush at Malta (December). In between, he re-opened talks with the Chinese, holding the first Sino-Soviet summit in decades; helped inspire the Tiananmen Square demonstrations that would be crushed in June 1989; and followed up his U.N. speech from December 1988 by announcing a 10 percent cut in the Soviet defense budget.

On specific arms control measures, the Soviet side kept the proposals coming, starting with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's speech in Vienna in January arguing for a 25 percent cut in both NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. In fact, as a well-placed Western official later pointed out, Gorbachev “moved so rapidly to satisfy Western demands in these negotiations [conventional forces in Europe] that he created coordination problems in the [NATO] alliance. Some of the Western proposals had been made on the assumption that Moscow would never accept them. When it did, some of the allies began to wonder if they could live with their own proposals.”¹²

¹⁰ Philip Zelikow Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Next Steps with the Germans on SNF,” March 13, 1989 (Bush Library 2010-2911-MR, declassified June 18, 2012): “Teltschik will not be coming this week” and “other political factors are at work...” Also, “Telephone Call to Chancellor Kohl,” April 21, 1989 [talking points labeled “The President Has Seen”] (Bush Library 2010-2914-MR, declassified June 6, 2012): “We’ve been trying to engage you for some time on this issue....”

¹¹ Document No. 74.

¹² See the discussion of “Soviet Foreign Policy Reborn” and quote in Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 192.

The contrast with the American pause became all too vivid for President Bush. On May 21, 1989, for example, Bush saw a *New York Times* editorial that opined: “Imagine that an alien spaceship approached earth and sent the message: ‘Take me to your leader.’ Who would that be? Without doubt, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev.” With some like-minded pressure from long-time friend James Baker, still upset after his Moscow visit, the president began pushing for “something to get the ball rolling” that he could present at the upcoming NATO summit. Yet, resistance from the secretary of defense, Dick Cheney, and especially the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meant that Baker could not win his preferred proposal of 25 percent troop cuts in Europe (echoing Shevardnadze from January). The ultimate American position meant a 20 percent cut in U.S. troops, and included an overall ceiling on both U.S. and Soviet forces in Europe that would mean disproportionate reductions for the Soviets. But Gorbachev was pleased that at least his U.N. speech was finally achieving some resonance in Washington. Perhaps more importantly for the Americans, the conventional forces proposal succeeded in changing the subject from Lance modernization, which had created such a split in NATO and between Kohl and Bush, and helped Bush achieve a successful NATO meeting.¹³

Allies like Mitterrand and even Thatcher had encouraged Bush to reach out to Gorbachev directly, but not until Bush went to Eastern Europe in July 1989—where he heard the reform Communists, such as Jaruzelski in Poland and Németh in Hungary, make the same plea because engaging the Soviet leader created political space for them to make change—did Bush overrule Scowcroft and the hawks and ask Gorbachev for a meeting. Bush’s explicit intention—contrary to subsequent American mythmaking—was to slow down the process of change in Eastern Europe. Bush was distinctly unimpressed when he met the dissidents and oppositionists like Lech Wałęsa in Poland, who called U.S. aid proposals “pathetic,”¹⁴ or Janos Kis in Hungary whom Bush quickly concluded should not be running his country.¹⁵ The well-informed account by Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott points out that Bush called for a Europe “whole and free” when he landed at the Warsaw airport, “[b]ut in the way he conducted himself throughout his visit, Bush made it clear that he was in no hurry to see that day come. Quite the contrary, he was nervous about how rapidly the Iron Curtain was becoming unraveled” and wanted to “shore up the holdovers of the old regime, whom he saw as forces for gradual change, against the longtime dissidents, who struck him as being recklessly impatient.”¹⁶ In this, Bush and Gorbachev were actually on the same page.

¹³ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 73–79.

¹⁴ For the colorful details of these uncomfortable meetings, see Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989*, pp. 301–305.

¹⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 126.

¹⁶ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 88–92.

About his trip to Poland and Hungary, Bush wrote in his memoir: “I realized that to put off a meeting with Gorbachev was becoming dangerous. Too much was happening in the East—I had seen it myself—and if the superpowers did not begin to manage events, those very events could destabilize Eastern Europe and Soviet-American relations.... I saw that the Eastern Europeans themselves would try to push matters as far as they could.”¹⁷ Characteristically, on the plane ride home from Europe in July when Bush sent his note to Gorbachev proposing the informal meeting that would take place at Malta, the president spent more time (and far more space in his memoir¹⁸) reaching out to the Communist dictators in China, who had murdered their pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989, than to the Communist reformer in Moscow who had refused to do so.¹⁹

Between the July idea of a Bush-Gorbachev meeting and the December reality at Malta, Eastern Europeans rushed in and took apart the Stalinist empire, including the Berlin Wall. Originally intended by the Americans as an “interim” session to prepare for a full-scale summit in 1990, the Bush-Gorbachev meeting at Malta would take on a life of its own, symbolically bringing the Cold War to a close. Stormy weather and raging seas in Malta would play havoc with the meeting planners’ idea of alternating U.S. and Soviet ships as picturesque sites for the meetings—thus providing something of a metaphor for the rush of events in Eastern Europe that played out beyond the control of both superpowers. In effect, the geopolitics of Europe had largely been overturned by the time of the Malta meeting. Certainly Bush’s reticence and embrace of the Communist reformers in the summer of 1989 had helped. Even more important was the forbearance of Gorbachev, his refusal to use force to repress even revolutionary changes of government in Eastern Europe, and his outright permission (to the Hungarians in March 1989, for example) to open their borders.²⁰

Going into the Malta summit, the Bush team was determined not to repeat Reagan’s theatricals. Reagan had successfully relieved the Soviet sense of threat through substantive arms control discussions with Gorbachev, including remarkable commitments to the abolition of nuclear weapons. For Bush, instead, as dozens of National Security Council and State Department memos make clear, Malta was meant to avoid any substantive discussion of arms control, and simply convey, as Secretary of State Baker wrote in his briefing memo on November 29, “a public sense, here and abroad, of a new pace and purpose to the U.S.-Soviet

¹⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 130.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132 compared to pp. 156–159.

¹⁹ For Bush’s actual letter to Gorbachev, July 21, 1989, see Document No. 76. This 3-page note “which I have personally written,” contains the characteristic Bush sentence: “In my view, it would be preferable to avoid the word ‘summit’ which is, at best, overworked, and at worst, a word whose connotation is one of a momentous happening.”

²⁰ For extended analysis and documentation on these points, see Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*.

dialogue with you leading as much as Gorbachev”—public relations in place of substance.²¹

In this context, Jack Matlock’s ranking of Malta with Reykjavik in terms of substantive importance carries no small irony. Reading the Bush administration documents preparing for Malta, one sees references to Reykjavik repeated almost as epithets, as the epitome of everything the Bush officials did *not* want to have happen at Malta. For example, when NSC staffer Philip Zelikow summed up foreign reaction on November 2, 1989, to the announcement of Malta a month hence, he specifically mentioned how careful Bush diplomacy had undercut the “spectre of another ‘Reykjavik.’” The memo went on to say, “These foreign reactions once again drive home our need to be on guard against rising expectations of concrete agreements or major policy pronouncements.”²² When NSC staffers Arnold Kanter and Robert Blackwill wrote up a memo on “Possible Initiatives in the Context of Malta” for Scowcroft, they commented “it appears as though Cheney and Powell” [the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs] “may resist all efforts to advance any concrete ideas or initiatives at Malta. They are innately suspicious of any such approach, worry about the appearance or reality of ‘Reykjavik II,’ and argue we are running serious risks of allowing Malta to force decisions about the defense program and budget that have yet to be made.”²³ Kanter and Blackwill argued against this mindset by defining the challenge as “to get something from the Soviets for the defense budget cuts we probably will be making in any event”; but Scowcroft and the president actually shared the Cheney-Powell view, at least until they saw Gorbachev first-hand at Malta.

The internal National Security Council documents signal a major missed opportunity at Malta to meet Soviet arms reductions proposals halfway. The evidence suggests that the Bush pause during 1989 delayed both strategic and tactical demilitarization for at least two years (the START Treaty would not be signed until 1991, and only in September of that year would Bush withdraw tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. bases and Navy ships). At that point Gorbachev had lost most of the domestic power to deliver on his side. Perhaps most striking on this point is the briefing memo from arms negotiations adviser Gen. Edward Rowny, who described the START Treaty as having “potential risks and few gains” and saw any reductions in naval weapons as “all losers for us”—recommending that

²¹ Document No. 79.

²² Philip Zelikow to Brent Scowcroft, “Foreign Government Reaction to the President’s Announcement of His Upcoming Meeting with Gorbachev,” November 2, 1989 (Bush Presidential Records, White House Office of Records Management, Subject File: C.F. Bush Library FOIA 1999-0273-F). The memo was couched as a draft for Scowcroft to send on to Bush, but the national security adviser scribbled in the margins, “Unnecessary. CIA had run down of reactions (public + private) in PDB [President’s Daily Brief] this a.m. Thanks anyway.”

²³ Arnold Kanter/Robert D. Blackwill, Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Possible Initiatives in the Context of Malta,” November 24, 1989 (Bush Library 2008-633-MR).

Bush say up front that the “US Navy is not on the bargaining table.” The American position going into Malta insisted that “the meeting must not become an ‘arms control summit’” since the Bush administration believed that Reagan had gone much too far in embracing Gorbachev and major arms reductions.²⁴

By 1991, of course, Bush would reverse course on almost all these positions, but for practical purposes too late to help Gorbachev demilitarize the Soviet Union. The naval nuclear weapons case provides one of the clearest examples of Bush administration obtuseness in 1989. Gorbachev would explicitly propose at Malta the removal and destruction of all naval tactical nuclear weapons but find no resonance at all on the American side.²⁵ Yet within the NSC staff, experts well knew that removal of naval tacticals was very much in the U.S. national security interest. A pre-Malta paper titled “Naval Arms Control” in the Arnold Kanter NSC files describes the circumstances under which naval tacticals would ever be used as implying “a catastrophic failure of U.S. defense policy”—i.e., a nuclear war with the USSR. In other words, they were weapons “that we don’t want to have to use.” The paper notes: “Removing tacnucs from *all* ships (subs and CVs included) and most importantly, Soviet Naval Aviation, has several advantages: nuclear weapons at sea are an *equalizer* of what are really very *unequal* navies and elimination avoids trading navies with the Soviets in a nuclear war at sea—that would be a win for the Soviets; removes START stumbling block; removes NCND [neither confirm nor deny presence of nuclear weapons] “problems for port visits; great political payoff for U.S.” It would also heighten the U.S. advantage in conventional weapons.²⁶ Taking Rowny’s and the navy’s side against such rational arguments, Scowcroft vetoed any mention of naval arms control in Kanter’s draft overview of possible initiatives for Malta,²⁷ and that was that, until September 1991.

The consensus view of the U.S. intelligence community two weeks before Malta helps explain the lack of urgency on the part of the Bush administration to wrap up arms control deals with Gorbachev. Expressed in a National Intelligence Estimate titled “The Soviet System in Crisis: Prospects for the Next Two Years,” the general consensus assumed that the current crisis in the USSR would continue even beyond the two-year timeframe, that “the regime will maintain the present course,” that Gorbachev was “relatively secure” in his leadership role, and that there was a less likely scenario of “unmanageable” decline that would lead

²⁴ Department of State, Information Memorandum to Secretary Baker from Gen. Edward L. Rowny [Special Adviser for Arms Control], November 17, 1989, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by the National Security Archive.

²⁵ Document No. 85.

²⁶ “Naval Arms Control,” n.d., Bush Presidential Records, National Security Council, Arnold Kanter Files, Subject Files, Summit (Malta) – November 1989 [3]. (Bush Library FOIA 1999-0273-F, declassified May 28, 2008).

²⁷ See Brent Scowcroft, Memorandum for the President, “How to Think about Naval Arms Control,” n.d. (Bush Library 2008-0627-MR, declassified August 15, 2012).

to a “repressive crackdown.” In hindsight, the dissenting view from the CIA’s deputy director for intelligence, John Helgerson, was more correct, predicting further progress towards a “pluralist—albeit chaotic—democratic system” in which Gorbachev’s political strength would “erode” and he would “progressively lose control of events.”²⁸

For the National Security Council meeting just before Malta, Bush’s talking points were all about lowering expectations. Implicitly contrasting his own prudence with Reagan’s abolitionism, the points decry negotiating with “reckless abandon,” and simply set a goal of getting a “better handle” on how to deal with the Soviets.²⁹ Bush’s briefing book for Malta betrays the administration’s actual priorities—Eastern Europe and its revolutionary changes were far down on the contents list, along with arms control.³⁰ Pride of place was Central America, where Bush’s right flank in domestic politics believed Castro was the devil, the Nicaraguan Sandinistas were a Communist beachhead pointed at Texas, and Gorbachev himself was the enabler and perhaps even the mastermind behind revolutionary movements in the hemisphere. In the Malta discussions, the Soviet leader called the American presumptions laughable: “It is not quite clear to us what you want from Nicaragua. There is political pluralism in that country, there are more parties than in the United States. And the Sandinistas—what kind of Marxists are they? This is laughable. Where are the roots of the problem? At the core are economic and social issues.” Likewise on Cuba: “The issue now is how to improve the current situation. There is a simple and well-proven method: one has to speak directly to Castro. You must learn: nobody can lord it over Castro.”³¹

Malta’s most significant outcome was simply the reassurance it provided to the two leaders through a face-to-face meeting, and the building of a personal relationship on which both would rely in the next two difficult years. In effect, Malta marked the beginning of actual diplomacy, which would be especially important for the German unification endgame of 1990, not to mention Gorbachev’s own reluctance to order domestic repression and pushback (the tragic interventions in the Baltics notwithstanding). Gorbachev, for example, told Bush at Malta: “First and foremost, the new U.S. president must know that the Soviet Union will not under any circumstances initiate a war. This is so important that I wanted to repeat the announcement to you personally. Moreover, the USSR is prepared

²⁸ National Intelligence Estimate 11-18-89, “The Soviet System in Crisis: Prospects for the Next Two Years,” November 1989, in Fischer, ed., *At Cold War’s End*, pp. 49–81. The Helgerson dissent is on p. 75.

²⁹ Brent Scowcroft to the President, “National Security Council Meeting, November 30, 1989,” George H.W. Bush Library, NSC Files, FOIA request F93-1217.

³⁰ The President’s Meetings with Soviet President Gorbachev, December 2–3, 1989, Malta [Briefing Book for the President]. Excerpts (contents pages, selected released pages). Source: George H.W. Bush Library, FOIA request 99-0273-F.

³¹ Document No. 110, Soviet Transcript of the Malta Summit, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*.

to cease considering the U.S. as an enemy and announce this openly.”³² When Gorbachev bristled at Bush’s repeated reference to “Western values” (a phrase found throughout the U.S. briefing materials for Malta), Bush heard him. Just before Malta, Gorbachev had found agreement on this point with Pope John Paul II, when the two of them discussed “universal human values” and the Pope commented, “it would be wrong for someone to claim that changes in Europe and the world should follow the Western model.”³³ Even though Bush told Kohl on December 3 that Gorbachev did not understand Western values,³⁴ the American president subsequently adopted Gorbachev’s phrasing, saying in his Brussels remarks immediately after the summit that the need to end the division of Europe was in accord with “values that are becoming universal ideals.”

The Malta transcript showed little trace of the fierce winter storm that disrupted the planned meeting venues (the leaders ultimately met only on the refurbished Soviet cruise liner, *Maxim Gorky*, safely moored to the dock). Interestingly, in an extended discussion with Baker and Shevardnadze, the two sides approached agreement on a negotiation to end the protracted war in Afghanistan, where the Soviets had already completed their withdrawal although the Najibullah government had not fallen as the Americans had expected. Baker bluntly remarked, “Stop your massive assistance to Kabul”—to which Gorbachev responded, “Leave this empty talk behind,” telling the Americans that tribal leaders are already talking with Najibullah, that the Afghan “dialogue itself will clarify this issue” in a “transition period.” “If the Afghans themselves decide that Najibullah must leave—God help them. This is their business.”

Apparently the biggest surprise to the Americans was Gorbachev’s insistence that the U.S. should stay in Europe, that the two superpowers “are equally integrated into European problems” and that they need to work together to keep those problems from exploding.³⁵ The American president responded with classic

³² Ibid.

³³ Document No. 80.

³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation of George H.W. Bush, John Sununu, Brent Scowcroft, and Helmut Kohl, December 3, 1989, Document No. 111 in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*.

³⁵ Condoleezza Rice subsequently called Gorbachev’s position at Malta on the U.S. staying in Europe “revolutionary change” (see Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989*, p. 403), but Gorbachev had explicitly made such assurances—to the Trilateral Commission delegation in January 1989 in answering a question from Henry Kissinger, repeatedly in conversations with Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl, among other leaders, and publicly in his famous Strasbourg speech on June 6, 1989. The Americans in the White House (in contrast to the State Department’s INR, for example) were apparently not listening, and as late as November 21, 1989, President Bush had suggested to West German Foreign Minister Genscher, much to the latter’s surprise and disagreement, that Gorbachev would propose at Malta the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany and Europe—the old American fear that the Soviets were attempting to “decouple” the U.S. from Europe. See Bush-Genscher memcon, November 21, 1989, George Bush Library, released under 2007-0051-MR.

expressions of reserve, insisting that he did not intend to posture over East Germany even though he was under severe domestic political pressure to “climb the Berlin Wall and to make broad declarations.” Bush affirmed his support for *perestroika*, and reassured Gorbachev that they both remember the Helsinki Final Act’s pronouncements on the inviolability of borders. In general, the American wanted to talk about practical details, such as specific congressional amendments on the U.S. side or arms deliveries in Central America from the Soviet bloc, while Gorbachev preferred to initiate broader philosophical discussions: “The world is experiencing a major regrouping of forces.”³⁶

But both men were clearly uneasy about the dramatic transformations taking place in Eastern Europe. Bush frankly pronounced himself “shocked by the swiftness” while Gorbachev acknowledged, “look at how nervous we are.” After warning Bush not to provoke or accelerate the changes, the Soviet leader in particular seemed to ask what kind of collective action they should take. He stressed the Helsinki process as the new European process and also mentioned the comment by former French President Giscard d’Estaing in January 1989 about a federal state of Western Europe: “Therefore, all of Europe is on the move, and it is moving in the direction of something new. We also consider ourselves Europeans, and we associate this movement with the idea of a common European home.” Gorbachev hoped for the dissolution of the blocs—“what to do with institutions created in another age?”—and suggested that the Warsaw Pact and NATO become, to an even greater degree, political organizations rather than military ones.

On the German question, neither leader expected events to move as fast as they would the following year. Just days before Malta, on November 28, Helmut Kohl announced his “10 Points” towards confederation, in a Bundestag speech the Soviet Foreign Ministry denounced as pushing change in “a nationalist direction.” At Malta, Gorbachev attributed the speech to politics and said Kohl “does not act seriously and responsibly.” But then Gorbachev asked whether a united Germany would be neutral or a member of NATO, suggesting that at least theoretically he has imagined the latter, although he may simply have been acknowledging the U.S. position. His clear preference was for the continuation of two states in Germany and only very slow progress towards any unification: “let history decide.” Bush was not eager for rapid progress either: “I hope that you understand that you cannot expect us not to approve of German reunification. At the same time ... [w]e are trying to act with a certain reserve.”

After Malta, the Americans raced to catch up with the arms control opportunities on offer from Gorbachev. Scowcroft seems not to have recognized the irony in his own memo to the President for the NSC meeting on December 5,

³⁶ The American memcons of the Malta conversations are published in this volume, while the Soviet transcript first appeared in English in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Mastpieces of History*, Document No. 110, pp. 619–646.

1989: “We came out of Malta with a lot of momentum and have laid to rest the notion—for now—that the Administration is dragging its feet and is unwilling to engage the Soviets.”³⁷ The draft talking points by NSC aide Condoleezza Rice for that NSC meeting reminded the participants: “The President has now committed himself to an ambitious arms control agenda before the June 1990 summit” and “the bureaucracy must not get in the way of the completion of the treaties.” Yet the START deal would not be done until 1991 because of recalcitrance from Defense Secretary Cheney and the U.S. Navy over on-site verification (the Soviets were willing to be more open than the American sailors)³⁸ and cherished weapons like submarine-launched cruise missiles. (In a classic contradiction between actual national security interests and the parochial concerns of the military service involved, the U.S. had far more coastal metropolises that could be threatened with these weapons than the Soviet Union did.)

On the Soviet side, Gorbachev’s senior foreign policy aide, Anatoly Chernyaev, saw the main point about Malta as the “normalcy” of the summit, the shared understanding that the Soviet Union and the United States were partners and that neither would attack the other; therefore, the threat of nuclear war was a thing of the past, as was the Cold War itself. Chernyaev saw Gorbachev making an intentional effort at Malta to discard the old reality of the Soviet threat, of the “terror” projected by the USSR in Europe as a result of its invasions and repressions. In Malta, according to Chernyaev, Gorbachev and Bush “gave hope to all humanity,” and just before Malta, at the Vatican, Gorbachev and the Pope “spoke like two good Christians.” The world had changed indeed.³⁹

³⁷ Brent Scowcroft [memorandum to the President], “National Security Council Meeting, December 5, 1989 (Bush Library 2005-0965-MR).

³⁸ For example, during the productive September 1989 ministerial between Baker and Shevardnadze in Wyoming, the secretary of state promised to address Soviet concerns about U.S. early-warning radars in Greenland and Great Britain. But the Pentagon reflexively vetoed the very idea of Soviet site visits to Thule and Fylingdales, seeing no benefit in confidence building or reciprocity, and predicting only pressure on the allies that might threaten modernization plans for the radars. See Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) [Paul Wolfowitz], Memorandum for Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Arms Control and Defense Policy [Arnold Kanter], November 1989, Bush Presidential Records, National Security Council, Arnold Kanter Files, Summit (Malta) – November 1989 [5] (Bush Library FOIA 1999-0273-F and 2008-0634-MR).

³⁹ Excerpt from Anatoly Chernyaev’s diary, January 2, 1990. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf.

Document No. 71: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 12:33 p.m. – 12:46 p.m.

January 23, 1989

In his first phone conversation with Gorbachev as president, Bush establishes the practice of direct calls to the Soviet leadership, which were to prove very productive. Gorbachev is eager to engage with the new president and reminds him several times of their conversations on Governors Island. After his U.N. speech and major unilateral cuts in conventional forces in Europe, Gorbachev hopes that the tremendous momentum in U.S.-Soviet relations that was achieved in collaboration with Reagan will continue uninterrupted. To emphasize their progress on all aspects of the U.S. agenda, the Soviet delegation had just announced at the conclusion of the CSCE review conference in Vienna that all political prisoners had been released and that jamming of foreign radio stations had stopped. However, Gorbachev was not the only one worried about where the new administration stood in terms of their changing relationship. Outgoing Secretary of State George Shultz would later recall in his memoir: “I was apprehensive that the ‘new team’ did not understand or accept that the cold war was over.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the Bush administration’s lengthy policy review would introduce a setback and a frustrating “pause” in U.S.-Soviet relations in 1989, which Chernyaev later dubbed the “lost year.”

The President said he appreciated very, very much the cordial message of congratulations which he received from the General Secretary. He said this was a thank you call to express his appreciation.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he welcomed the call and was very pleased to speak on the telephone with the President. He again wished to congratulate him on his inauguration.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said his intention was to go forward as they had discussed on Governors Island. He was undertaking policy reviews immediately which would come up with ideas on how to improve the bilateral relationship and the policies started by President Reagan. He could assure the General Secretary that there would be no unnecessary delay. He just wanted to take a new look at policies and would then be ready to move forward as quickly as possible for both sides.

General Secretary Gorbachev thanked the President for his words. He said that, for his part, he wished to reaffirm all that they had discussed on Governors Island. Everything he had told the President remained valid. General Secretary Gorbachev said that he had familiarized himself with the President’s speech and

⁴⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1139.

found new elements that were of interest and importance in it, especially on the subject of the U.S.-Soviet relations. Combined with what the President had just said, it strengthened his conviction that the two would expand relations and build upon the assets which already existed.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said he had just two points to make. He wanted the General Secretary to know that his son and grandson had been deeply moved by their visit to Armenia. This had not been a political trip but rather a way to express how Americans felt about the enormous tragedy in Armenia. The President said he and Mrs. Bush were very grateful for the warm way in which their son and grandson had been received.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he wished to confirm that this very human gesture had been very well received by the Soviet public.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said his second point was that the General Secretary had been very generous in his time with Henry Kissinger. General Scowcroft would be inviting Kissinger to the White House in the next few days, and they would listen attentively to what Kissinger reported. They would not necessarily believe everything because this was, after all, Henry Kissinger but they knew that the General Secretary had been generous with his time, and they would listen attentively to what Dr. Kissinger said.

General Secretary Gorbachev thanked the President for this information and said he hoped that the President would find something of interest in what Dr. Kissinger reported.

The President said he had one last point. He hoped that Jim Baker, after consulting in Europe with Allies, would be able to establish a relationship with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze along the lines of the one Secretary Shultz had had. *The President* said that Jim Baker was very close to him, and a good working relationship with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze would benefit U.S.-Soviet relations.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he understood fully and would do everything in his power to assure the relationship between the two foreign ministers would not only be maintained, but also expanded and multiplied.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said he looked forward to working with him to strengthen world peace.

General Secretary Gorbachev said that the President could rely on full cooperation from him in this effort. Everything which they had discussed remained valid. The Soviet side would proceed from a position of realism but also see the broad perspectives and try to act in a manner which benefited both the Soviet and American people and the world community as a whole. *General Secretary Gorbachev* said he had heard that at 7:30 that morning the President had sworn in his White House team. He sent regards to all these people, and thanked the President for his call. He also wished to pass sincere regards from him and Mrs. Gorbachev to the President's wife Barbara.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said that his wife looked forward very much to getting to know Raisa even better. The two would get along very well.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he was very pleased by their conversation and wished the President all success in his activity.

The President thanked Gorbachev and wished him good-bye.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 72: CIA Intelligence Estimate:
“Moscow’s 1989 Agenda for U.S.–Soviet Relations”

February 1989

During the Reagan administration, the Office of Soviet Analysis at CIA produced some of the most accurate and prescient reports on the Gorbachev reforms, often in opposition to their anti-Gorbachev superiors such as CIA Director William Casey and his deputy, Robert Gates. Here, at the very beginning of the Bush administration, SOVA also shows its skills at assessing the White House mood. The discussion of Gorbachev’s “surprises,” which put the onus on Washington to reciprocate, and even place the U.S. on the defensive, are strikingly congruent with White House anxiety at the time. Disparaging the importance of Gorbachev’s unilateral conventional arms reduction announcement at the United Nations and Moscow’s START proposal at Reykjavik, the analysts misconstrue Gorbachev’s thinking about “sufficiency” and the arms race in reverse. But here the CIA is right in tune with the Scowcroft thinking that dominates the White House. The potential surprises are not assessed on whether they are in the U.S. interest, only whether they make the U.S. look laggardly—exactly the administration’s concern. Presciently, the CIA predicts the short-range nuclear cuts that Gorbachev would propose to Baker on May 11, much to the latter’s shock and sense of being one-upped. But if Baker had read this briefing, he should not have been surprised.

SCOPE NOTE

It has been four years since the Intelligence Community produced an assessment of Soviet policy towards the United States. Since that time, Mikhail Gorbachev has become General Secretary of the Communist Party as well as head of state, and Soviet foreign policy in general and towards the United States in particular has changed considerably. This Intelligence Assessment examines Soviet positions on all issues currently under discussion with the United States and explores some of the tactical moves Moscow is likely to make in upcoming talks on arms control, regional issues, and bilateral concerns. In addition, this paper provides the domestic political, economic, and military motivations as well as the ideological framework for Soviet policy towards the United States in the coming year.

KEY JUDGMENTS

Information available as of 3 February 1989 was used in this report.

Gorbachev’s foreign policy is a direct outflow from his domestic agenda. One of his main priorities as General Secretary has been to obtain relief from the arms competition with the United States and its allies as well as with China in order to

focus on economic, political, and social recovery from the devastating legacies of Stalinism. In 1989 Gorbachev's incentives for pursuing this course will, in our view, be even greater. For the second straight year economic performance has been in decline—because of the turmoil generated by his restructuring policies—and he faces growing budget deficits.

Gorbachev's ability to focus on his US agenda may be constrained by the plethora of domestic issues requiring attention in 1989. He will most likely be distracted by urgent problems, such as continued ethnic turmoil, consumer unrest, and the need to protect his political flanks. His foreign policy could appear episodic if the timing of his initiatives and responses are affected by such domestic demands.

Moreover, the Soviets are reaching a critical juncture in the preparation of the 13th Five-Year Plan for the 1991–1995 period. Soviet political authorities have admitted that restructuring the economy will require moving some resources away from the defense sector, and military officials have stated publicly that defense spending is to be reduced. Although the need to meet key planning deadlines will not, by itself, make the Soviets more accommodating in arms control negotiations or other forums, we think it will increase their interest in reducing the uncertainties vis-à-vis the United States that would affect their defense planning.

A key goal for Moscow is concluding a START agreement in 1989. Soviet statements and positions taken in Geneva lead us to believe that the Soviets' concerns about a near-term deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) have lessened, which may make it possible for them to accept less explicit linkage between a START accord and SDI limits than they have previously. Soviet officials also appear to be probing for ways to resolve the issue of sea-launched cruise missiles, which they see as the other major substantive obstacle to the conclusion of a START Treaty.

Conventional arms control clearly has moved to a high position on Moscow's East-West agenda. Reductions of conventional forces offer potential benefits to Gorbachev's economic program in terms of labor, materials, and industrial capacity that could be redirected to the production of civilian goods. Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral cuts is consistent with the reports that the Soviet leadership intends to trim the share of resources going to defense. It also indicates, we believe, that Gorbachev feels he cannot afford to allow decisions on resource priorities to be dependent on the outcome of what promises to be complex and protracted multinational negotiations. [...]

Gorbachev's move on conventional forces is perhaps the most vivid illustration to date of his strategy of employing political leverage instead of military strength to promote the USSR's security. Although the cuts he announced will reduce the immediacy of the Warsaw Pact offensive threat, the remaining forces will leave the Soviets secure against any plausible military initiative by NATO. Meanwhile, the resulting dampening of public and parliamentary support for NATO defense modernization could well result in an overall net gain for Soviet

security in Europe. Gorbachev could take a similar tack in the strategic arena if he believes the START talks are bogged down; there are a number of moves he could make that, in practical terms, would do little to change the USSR's strategic nuclear posture but which would have a potent impact on Western public perceptions and undercut support for the US modernization programs.

In other arms control arenas, we think that in the coming year the Soviets are likely to:

- Seek to complete the verification protocol to the Threshold Test Ban Treaty so that both it and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty may be submitted for ratification and work can begin on further reducing the limits for nuclear testing, in support of Moscow's stated goal of a comprehensive test ban.
- Pursue a flexible new policy on verification in all negotiations, attempting to meet demands of the West for the information and access it considers necessary to monitor compliance.
- Attempts to capitalize on the Paris conference by spurring the talks on a chemical weapons ban in the Conference on Disarmament negotiations, to move closer to their goal of a verifiable global ban on chemical weapons.

Regional conflicts, human rights, and economic and other bilateral issues also will continue to receive high-level attention in 1989. Progress on these issues enhances the USSR's image abroad, provides a calmer environment for achieving arms control agreements, and moderates Soviet obligations for military and economic assistance to client states. Specifically, the Soviets are likely to:

- Continue intensive talks with the United States on ways to resolve and mutually guarantee settlement of regional conflicts. In this connection, we expect the Soviets to meet their 15 February deadline for withdrawing all their troops from Afghanistan.
- Maintain an active dialogue on human rights in an effort to project a better image of the Soviet Union abroad and help "legitimize" legal, social, and political reforms inside the USSR.
- Attempt to enhance bilateral economic relations by pressing for elimination of US trade restrictions, seeking most-favored-nation status, and courting American firms to establish joint ventures with Soviet companies. The latter would help integrate the USSR into the world economy, allow it to acquire state-of-the-art technology and managerial and marketing skills, and boost exports to the United States.

To improve the general political atmosphere, Gorbachev has put considerable energy in "normalizing" Moscow's relations with Washington. He views such relations as critical to creating a calmer international environment that will allow the USSR to focus on the rejuvenation of its economy and society. He is likely, therefore, to continue to place great value on developing a personal dialogue with

the US President and between Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and the US Secretary of State as a means for providing impetus to negotiations and for sustaining continuity in a key bilateral relationship.

Gorbachev has found significant advantage in surprising the United States with bold proposals or unilateral moves and is likely to continue to do so as he seeks the room to maneuver that he believes his policy of *perestroyka* demands. The surprise tactic puts the onus for reciprocal actions on the United States or puts the United States on the defensive. [...]

The Importance of Summits and Ministerials:

Gorbachev uses summits as a means to establish personal relationships with foreign leaders. He values summits with the United States as critical for generating momentum in arms control talks and circumventing bureaucratic red tape at the working level of negotiations. Summits also provide a stage for asserting his role as a statesman to both foreign and domestic audiences and are an important tool for reading Washington. Gorbachev probably will continue to use Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's meetings with the US Secretary of State as an important channel for high-level dialogue, both to provide impetus for resolving impasses in arms control talks and to keep relations in general on track. Gorbachev recognizes that some summits—such as Geneva and Moscow—primarily serve as opportunities for dialogue, while others—such as Reykjavik and Washington—can produce more tangible results.

Possible Surprises:

Gorbachev has given the West a number of surprises over the last four years, including the elimination of the SS-20 force, acceptance of on-site inspections for confidence building and arms control verification, withdrawal from Afghanistan, the announced unilateral cuts in Soviet conventional forces, and the declaration that the Soviet Union will begin to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles in 1989. These moves have demonstrated a willingness to subordinate Moscow's traditionally enduring military security factors in foreign policy pursuits to Gorbachev's broader policy calculations, which bank heavily on the positive political impact of surprise announcements. This trend is likely to continue as the Soviet leader continues to seek the room for maneuver that he believes his policy of *perestroyka* demands. [...]

The following are some possible (though not necessarily likely) proposals or unilateral moves we could see in 1989:

- *Dismantle the Krasnoyarsk radar.* [...]
- *Delink START from Defense and Space.* [...]
- *Reduce the size of the SS-18 force.* [...]
- *Reduce short-range ballistic missiles in Europe.* [...]
- *Return the Northern Territories to Japan.* [...]
- *Withdraw the Soviet brigade from Cuba.* [...]
- *Seek repeal of the Jackson-Vanik and Stevenson Amendments.* [...]
- *Offer on-site inspection for COCOM purchases.* [...]

Gorbachev has found significant advantage in making surprise moves: he gains political credit that he does not have to share with Washington, and he puts the onus for reciprocal actions on the United States or puts the United States on the defensive. Most important, such steps have moved him closer to his objective—reducing the level of tension in East-West relations.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2010-0156-F in 2013 by the National Security Archive [original in Condoleezza Rice Files, U.S.-Soviet Relations (3)].]

Document No. 73: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the President:
“Getting Ahead of Gorbachev”

March 1, 1989

This document reveals how justified Shultz’s concerns were about the inability of the new administration to keep up the momentum developed between Gorbachev and Reagan. The overriding need that Scowcroft sees for Bush’s foreign policy is “getting ahead of Gorbachev,” which he calls “a complicated and enduring task.” The memo gives no indication that the Cold War is over or that bold initiatives from Gorbachev, if responded to, could lead to a transformation of international relations. No new initiatives are proposed; instead, Scowcroft warns the president that now “is an especially bad time to put forth flashy proposals on the assumption that Gorbachev cannot accept them. He has surprised us before.” He complains that Gorbachev is capturing the public’s imagination, especially in Europe, and that the U.S. needs to counteract this and grab the limelight. Revealingly, the first of several goals the memo sets out is to create “the image of America’s foreign policy as driven by clear objectives.”

No mention is made of Gorbachev’s groundbreaking speech at the United Nations and his unilateral cuts in Europe are only referred to as “reported.” In contrast, the memo suggests that “[i]n the European security realm, our first priority is to underscore the credibility of NATO’s nuclear deterrent through modernization.” This suggestion would lead to Bush’s failed campaign to persuade Germany to modernize Lance short-range missiles (FOTL), which took three months and a lot of effort by the administration. Scowcroft is concerned about Gorbachev’s influence on U.S. allies. The latter’s idea of a common European home is seen as a challenge, not a welcome sign of new thinking; Scowcroft suggests that the United States needs to “counter” it “by pointing out that we remain in that home as welcome guests, not as with the Soviets in Eastern Europe, as occupiers.” Finally, the memo makes clear that the administration is not likely to provide any substantial economic aid to the reforming countries, as compared to other allies: “for political and economic reasons, Japan and Europe are more sympathetic than we to East European and Soviet requests for Western investment.”

This memorandum lays out the premises that I believe should guide the way we go about developing an overall strategy for U.S.-Soviet relations.

Gorbachev presents us with major challenges but also with opportunities. As you know, he is a skilled leader whose diplomatic activities have significantly altered the international community’s view of the Soviet Union. He is very good; we have to be better.

Getting and staying ahead of Gorbachev is less a question of a few early and dramatic proposals than a requirement that we develop a sound strategy. Trying to match Gorbachev headline for headline, given our need for domestic and allied consensus, will lead us down the wrong path. Rather, we need to put forth

considered and consistent positions while negotiating from strength. We will be creative, but should seek a steady pace that can lead to real and sustainable progress.

Gorbachev's adroit diplomacy is rooted in an understanding of international politics that far outstrips his predecessors' in breadth and sophistication. Not satisfied to number only weak and dependent states like Vietnam and Ethiopia among Soviet partners, Gorbachev is determined to improve relations with all of the global power centers, including China, Japan, and our Western European allies. Gorbachev wants to turn adversaries into potential sources of support, smoothing points of friction that drain his all too scarce political and economic resources.

The rhetoric of his peace offensive has been accompanied by a willingness to make dramatic "concessions" in the military arena. Gorbachev possesses a refined understanding of the role of military power. He will sometimes conduct a tactical retreat, surrendering military advantages in order to gain the upper hand politically. Weakening NATO remains his prime international objective.

If the troop cuts in Eastern Europe are carried out as reportedly planned, they will be militarily significant. The political impact will be even greater. The pictures on the day that Soviet boys begin to leave Hungary, the GDR and Czechoslovakia will do more to promote the image of a changed Soviet Union than four decades of Soviet proclamations of peaceful intent.

The bold activity on the international front complements his domestic reforms. Yet the pace of change is slow in the U.S.S.R. Economic, nationality and social problems are mounting. Gorbachev enjoys the support of intellectuals but most workers are suspicious of the reforms and many bureaucrats are hostile. But whatever the reception at home, perestroika and glasnost' are having an impact on the Soviet Union's image abroad.

Some of Gorbachev's rhetoric (and some of the initiatives) could unsettle the postwar status quo. You may face major upheavals in Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Union itself during your Presidency. As uncertainties grow, we must preserve the traditional pillars of American postwar strength: military power, economic resilience, firm alliances and skillful diplomacy.

We must continue to stress the fact that Soviet flexibility is, in large part, a response to Western, especially U.S., policies. Clearly, it would be unwise to walk away from a successful strategy which has brought us to this point. This is our agenda, not his, and we need to recapture credit for it.

Yet in the current environment we cannot afford to be naysayers. Gorbachev's "new foreign policy" cannot be dismissed as propaganda. It is often backed up by action. And we do not want to miss opportunities to improve the relationship and move to our own vision of the future.

Our review of policy has begun and we will proceed with dispatch. But the worst thing that we can do at this critical juncture is make policy precipitously or in a piecemeal fashion. This is an especially bad time to put forth flashy proposals on the assumption that Gorbachev cannot accept them. He has surprised us before.

I suggest the following strategic approach:

First, we should work on the domestic side to strengthen the image of America's foreign policy as driven by clear objectives. The appeal of Gorbachev is his decisiveness. We cannot meet him head on if we do not appear confident about our purposes and agenda. Attending to the economic problems that weaken us abroad, including the trade and budget deficits, will reinforce our global image as strong and vital. And the spirit of bipartisanship that you have rekindled gives us an opportunity to present a united American policy for the first time in a generation. We may, at last, be able to concentrate on our core goals instead of warring over the details of implementation.

Second, we need to send a clear signal that relations with our allies are our first priority. Jim Baker's trip to Europe was a good start in this direction. Perhaps as we approach a NATO summit, you should make a major speech dealing with Europe. One of the aims of Soviet policy is to distance us from our friends. We can counter Gorbachev's "common European home" theme by pointing out that we remain in that home as welcome guests, not as with the Soviets in Eastern Europe, as occupiers.

In the European security realm, our first priority is to underscore the credibility of NATO's nuclear deterrent through modernization. With regard to conventional arms control, the alliance must develop a political strategy soon concerning conventional force reductions and where we want them to lead. We might be able to offer an innovative proposal for a more extensive troop inspection regime and other confidence building measures. These measures should be announced as building on Gorbachev's troop cut to reduce the possibility of "surprise attack" through our own proposals to increase transparency.

Similarly, we will need to prepare carefully for bilateral arms control, including START. Arms control is not the only issue on the U.S.-Soviet agenda, but it is the one watched most closely by the world community. If we perform competently in arms control, confidence in our ability to manage the broader relationship will soar.

Third, after our review of policy, we may wish to undertake initiatives with Eastern Europe. The East Europeans, to varying degrees, are taking advantage of Gorbachev's invitation to exercise greater control over their own affairs. Eastern Europe is a weak link in Gorbachev's strategy. We should exploit this but must do so in a prudent way.

Our best lever is economic assistance to the East. But the management of East-West economic relations poses special challenges for us. For political and economic reasons, Japan and Europe are more sympathetic than we to East European and Soviet requests for Western investment. They are pressing for a weakening of COCOM procedures and restrictions. The Administration needs to establish acceptable boundaries for East-West economic cooperation and then coordinate them with our allies.

Fourth, the recent settlements in Afghanistan and Southern Africa have raised hopes that U.S.-Soviet cooperation will spur agreements in other parts of the

world. We should work aggressively to promote regional stability, aware that the Soviet Union can be an important asset in some but not all regions. In Central America, for instance, multilateral efforts may be more effective if the Soviet Union is excluded.

Finally, you will, in due course, need to lay out a vision of American power as a global stabilizing force in its own right. Whatever the state of U.S.-Soviet relations, America will continue to have interests abroad to defend. In the Persian Gulf, for instance, our military commitment provided the stability that supported the UN search for a peaceful settlement. We need to establish the principle that American power is not simply a reaction to Soviet military capability. This will be important over the next few years because Gorbachev may succeed in diminishing the sense of an overt Soviet threat in a number of areas of the world.

“Getting ahead of Gorbachev” is a complicated and enduring task. The American people, our allies and the international community are looking to you for steady and confident leadership. The time that you take now to set a sure course is a good investment, one that will pay dividends throughout your Presidency.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0766-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 74: Record of Conversation between Gorbachev and Baker, Moscow

May 11, 1989

This is the first conversation between Gorbachev and the new U.S. secretary of state. The Bush administration continues to be concerned about Gorbachev's popularity (see previous document) and the robustness of the U.S. nuclear deterrent in Europe, and is trying to persuade West Germany to deploy a new model of tactical nuclear missile (FOTL). Responding to developments in Eastern Europe, the administration had earlier decided that President Bush would make his first major foreign policy address on the region in Hamtramck, Michigan, on April 17, 1989. However, in this conversation, the priority is still not the sweeping changes in the USSR after the first free elections of March 1989, or in Eastern Europe, but nuclear deterrence in Europe. Baker accuses Gorbachev of playing games with his revolutionary proposals to get rid of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe: "We understand the political appeal of the third zero. But that appeal is only political, not strategic, not from the standpoint of security." Gorbachev reminds Baker that the Soviets made a big concession to Shultz in April 1987 by adding their cutting edge short-range missile, the SS-23/Oka, to the list of weapons to be eliminated under the INF Treaty in return for U.S. assurances that weapons of that class would not be deployed in Europe. Akhromeyev explains the details of the compromise achieved in 1987, which went against the recommendations of the Soviet military. Baker defends the U.S. priority to modernize the Lance missile, dismissing Gorbachev's position as simply "trying to put us at a further disadvantage." At the time, the Bush administration can only see Gorbachev's bold initiatives as political challenges to its own timid stance on arms control.

Gorbachev. Greetings, Mr. Secretary of State. It is good that we are meeting. The ice has broken, and now it must begin to clear. I say this every spring. Likewise, in the context of the changes taking place in our two countries and the world as a whole, we need to think about how to continue everything that has been put in motion by the combined efforts of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Baker. Thank you for your welcoming words, Mr. General Secretary. I have to say that, before my departure, I had many discussions with the president. He asked me to relay that he is very interested in my visit. He also asked me to convey that we would like to resume cooperation with the Soviet Union in all aspects of our relationship. We are striving towards an active, constructive, positive, and ever-expanding relationship with your country.

The president asked me to express his appreciation for the letter you recently sent him. In particular, he wanted to let you know that he appreciates your statement that the Soviet Union has not supplied arms to Nicaragua since 1988. He

wanted me to ask you if you had any objections to making this public. This could be done after our meeting, or in some other manner. As I was saying to your Minister of Foreign Affairs, it would be very beneficial to us if you could give a statement on this. [...]

Gorbachev. First of all, let me thank you for the letter from President Bush that you brought. We take into consideration the thoughts expressed in this letter. Please let the president know that we will study his letter very carefully.

I noticed at one point in the letter the president mentioned the possibility that a stronger Soviet Union might exhibit its military power in a more decisive manner, and that would cause the United States concern. I want to tell you: I am convinced that fundamentally it is in the interest of both our countries that the USSR and the USA should feel secure. And a country can only feel secure when it is strong. [...]

We often hear different things from Washington. However, we certainly differentiate between what the president says and what others sometimes say. Obviously Washington's policy will be decided in Washington and not in Moscow. And the Kremlin's policy will be decided in the Kremlin and not elsewhere. However, this does not mean that our countries shouldn't take into account experiences of years past in our policy; we should aspire to build our policy on the basis of reality. [...]

Now [...] regarding making public the fact that the Soviet Union has not been supplying weapons to Nicaragua since 1988. Here I would make a different emphasis. We believe that this should be seen as creating preconditions for new steps in the direction of political settlement in Central America. Maybe we did not succeed in formulating the main idea sufficiently clearly in our letter to the president. And this idea—and on this issue we worked it through with Castro, who accepted it—is that we need a moratorium for weapon supplies to the Central American region from anywhere. If you could make this public, and as one of the elements [mention] that the Soviet Union has not supplied weapons to Nicaragua since last year, then, I think it would be evidence of considerable movement of thinking and policy. [...]

[*Gorbachev.*] There is also the matter of tactical nuclear weapons. In regards to that I would like to remind you what happened here, at this very table, in April of 1987. Maybe you know what I'm talking about. There was a discussion about the so-called short-range missiles. Secretary Shultz insisted that our new short range missile "Oka," known in the West as "SS-23," be included in the INF Treaty, despite the fact that its range is less than 500 km. We initially objected, but in the end agreed. At the same time we agreed with Secretary Shultz that this type of missile would no longer be developed by either side. That's exactly what happened, check the records and you will see.

And now it turns out that you are planning, in the 1990s, to develop a missile analogous to our SS-23. I won't even mention how this looks from the moral standpoint. And how does it affect the outlook for these talks? In any case, is it clear who shall bear responsibility for the consequences?

Together with our allies we proposed to negotiate on tactical nuclear weapons. Our intention is to review the nuclear component of dual-purpose weapons as well. You maintain that the Soviet Union has an advantage in conventional weapons. The elimination of this asymmetry in conventional weapons is essentially the first step of reductions under discussion in Vienna. Why not do the same with tactical nuclear weapons?

This year the Soviet Union will unilaterally withdraw 500 warheads of tactical nuclear weapons from Eastern Europe. If you are willing, we could consider even more radical steps. Over the course of 1989-1991 we are prepared to withdraw all our nuclear weapons from the territories of our Warsaw Pact allies, provided the U.S. reciprocates.

Perhaps the American people are not overly concerned about tactical nuclear weapons. But in Europe this is a critical issue. We are prepared to have an exchange of ideas with you, regarding both the conventional weapons and the tactical nuclear ones. We are ready to hear your ideas about steps to be taken in this field. I wanted to inform you of our intentions ahead of time, because we want to engage with you on real policy.

I heard that the U.S. [National] Security Council has a group dedicated to discrediting Gorbachev and *perestroika*. Perhaps Mr. Gates is in charge of it. If this is indeed true we will never be able to deepen our relationship. From our side, we are not going to play dirty with the United States. Any attempt to do so would simply be unrealistic. But we are within our rights to expect the same from the United States. Past experience demonstrates that by working together, by seeking to balance our interests, we can move forward and find solutions that would be profitable to both sides, so to speak. I believe that, as former secretary of the treasury, this approach would resonate with you.

So let us court public opinion by working together, cooperating, creating real policies.

Baker. We are on the same page. We agree with you wholeheartedly and, I wish to assure you, the National Security Council. [...]

[*Gorbachev*] [...] in the second stage we can reduce them by, let's say, another 25 percent, and finally by 1997 actualize the reductions to the levels we had suggested. At the same time we can discuss the issue of tactical nuclear weapons. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves in this regard.

Baker. So you would like to eliminate the disparity, to start with?

Gorbachev. We merely wish to say that the process of negotiations on nuclear weapons is crucial. It should move forward in tandem with the process of limiting and reducing weapons in Europe. The reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe would not precede the elimination of asymmetry in conventional weapons. Perhaps, parallel to the second stage of reductions in conventional weapons.

You mentioned that this is a politically appealing topic. But that's not what is at the heart of the matter. This is a vital issue for Europeans, given that tactical missiles cover a significant portion of Europe's territory.

Baker. I would like to disagree. The point is not that they cover a significant portion of Europe's territory. The point is that, in great part, they have ensured peace in Europe via our flexible response strategy. And that is a defensive strategy.

Gorbachev. But we are not asking you to act unilaterally. We are proposing reciprocal actions.

Now let us return to the matter which we were discussing at this table with Secretary Shultz. I have to say that, in light of that discussion, your efforts to modernize missiles are unexpected. We had agreed with Shultz that such missiles would not be created.

Akhromeyev. I would like to remind you that Secretary Shultz initially proposed that both sides keep 75 such missiles in Europe. However, he later agreed that this type of missiles should not be present in Europe. And we went by the premise that the United States would not create such missiles.

Gorbachev. It is important to recall this if we are to maintain trust between our nations.

Baker. I have a different understanding of this matter. I would like to hear from Ambassador Ridgway, who was present at those talks.

Ridgway. In the course of the negotiations we had agreed to consider the SS-23 missile as having a range of over 500 km. We agreed not to have systems with this range. In the framework of this arrangement we agreed not to deploy such a system, however, this did not include a missile to replace "Lance." In April of 1987 the question before NATO was: second zero or the deployment of a certain number of missiles. NATO decided not to deploy missiles with a range over 500 km. But we were discussing completely different missiles. So I can't agree with Marshal Akhromeyev.

Gorbachev. No, this is not the case.

Shevardnadze. We made a concession, and our military even criticized us for giving up the SS-23 missiles.

Akhromeyev. I would like to emphasize that the SS-23 missile does not have a range of 500 km. It was included in the INF according to the so called type rule. We agreed with Secretary Shultz to count this missile as pertaining to this rule. However, the U.S. was aware that its range is less than 500 km.

Gorbachev. At the time we had to move past an impasse, and we decided to accommodate the American side, though it meant going against our military. Now this brings up the question: why are we cutting the SS-23 missiles? Incidentally, I think we haven't cut all of them yet. And now you're dragging similar missiles here.

Baker. Upgrades are necessary due to a great imbalance favoring the USSR, with your advantage in tanks and other types of conventional weapons. Perhaps at a certain stage we could begin to have this discussion, if at first you'd find it possible to decrease your advantage in tactical nuclear arms, reducing it to our level. Perhaps at that stage we will not need to upgrade.

Gorbachev. In that case we could also give you a whole list of our concerns. But this is why we have the Vienna negotiations, and we are very determined to

achieve real results. What you are planning we see as highly undesirable, what's more—it is harmful to the negotiation process.

Baker. I just received a memo regarding the Soviet Union's upgrades of its short-range nuclear weapons. From 1981 to 1988 the Soviet Union carried out a comprehensive upgrade of tactical nuclear weapons. Thus, a large number of FROG-7 missiles were replaced by SS-21 missiles, which are more accurate and reliable. Old artillery was exchanged for self-propelled nuclear artillery. As a result, instead of the prior advantage favoring NATO in this category, now the Warsaw Pact countries have a 2:1 advantage. As the Soviet Union itself recognizes, it now has a 2:1 advantage in short range missiles, which have a triple capacity to deliver conventional, nuclear, and chemical weapons.

Gorbachev. I don't want to get into all these details right now. The place to discuss them is at the negotiations. I spelled out our position numerous times—in London, Washington, other places. I won't repeat myself. What you are describing was already in place when the INF Treaty was signed. The situation hasn't changed since.

I brought up this issue so you could weigh our concerns regarding your modernizations. We are all for negotiating with you. We would like the negotiations to be efficient and practical. The first stage is the elimination of the asymmetry. In this general context the question of tactical nuclear arms isn't going anywhere, we can't get away from it. It is of great concern to the Europeans, not only in the West, but also in the East. We'll have to untangle that knot. Think about this issue. We don't want to butt heads with you.

Shevardnadze. The best way is to start the negotiations.

Gorbachev. This would also help alleviate the concerns of the public. Think about that.

Baker. You're requesting this, and we will do it. But we have a different approach. We believe that a minimal number of nuclear weapons is absolutely necessary for our flexible response strategy, which ensures continued peace in Europe. We understand the political appeal of the third zero. But that appeal is only political, not strategic, not from the standpoint of security. In order for us to be able to cooperate with you on this issue, or at least to look for a way towards such cooperation, it would be more fitting if you said: we are prepared to decrease our very significant advantage. At that point we could talk about these arms. But we can't do it while we are at a disadvantage.

I would like to again remind you of your words: there should be no suspicions between us that one side wants to put the other at a disadvantage. Here we are already at a disadvantage, you already have the advantage in tactical nuclear arms, in conventional arms. And now, recognizing the political appeal of the third zero, you are insisting on negotiations and trying to put us at a further disadvantage.

Gorbachev. No, that is not the case. We don't want misunderstanding between us on this issue. Your argument that the Soviet Union has an advantage has not convinced me. Indeed, in terms of aviation, the advantage lies with the West. If you account for everything, then in terms of tactical nuclear weapons we are

evenly balanced, but it is a terrible balance at a very high level. I repeat, you'll have a tough time proving that your stance on this issue is reasonable.

Baker. As I said, we understand the political appeal of your position.

Gorbachev. Negotiations to radically decrease the military confrontation in Europe are now underway. Under these circumstances, the modernization of nuclear weapons, especially this type of modernization, raises many questions about the intentions of the U.S. So, I repeat, now that negotiations have started, let's think together how to dovetail this problem into the framework of the negotiations.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Anna Gabrielian.*]

Document No. 75: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the President:
“Scope Paper—Your Visit to Poland”

June 29, 1989

Written on the eve of Bush’s departure for Europe, this paper provides a brief overview of the domestic situation in Poland (Scowcroft prepared a similar memorandum on Hungary, too), and suggests the main issues the president will face in his discussions with local leaders. The visit will take place after historic free elections in Poland on June 4 and 18 have given the Solidarity opposition movement all but one of the open seats and after the symbolic reburial of Imre Nagy in Hungary on June 16. Bush is also scheduled to speak to the Polish parliament (the “Sejm”). (An original line crossed out in the draft reads: “you will not make many more important foreign policy speeches than this one in your presidency.”) While aptly describing the situation in Poland—“Solidarity is legitimate but not in power and the regime is in power but not legitimate”—the memo does not suggest any specific steps to show support for democratic reform. In fact, the main concern here is that since “Poles look first and foremost to America and thus to you as a beacon of hope,” expressions of support would lead to “high expectations of what the United States can do to help.” In Hungary, the president is also advised to respond to requests for economic assistance without specific commitments: “[a]s in Poland, you will want to deliver a message that the responsibility for economic progress in Hungary lies principally with the Hungarians but that the West is willing to help.”⁴¹

Setting: Poland is a country of contrasts—between a dynamic political awakening and a stagnant and worsening economic situation. Solidarity’s overwhelming electoral victory left no doubts that the Communist Party is despised and mistrusted. The results have strengthened the voices of Party conservatives who never supported the Roundtable and predicted that Jaruzelski’s accommodation would produce precisely this result. On the other hand, Solidarity emerged from the victory with a crisis of identity. The union is reluctant to swap its role as outsider for a responsible place in governing Poland and imposing economic reforms. Solidarity worries that its own constituency will turn against the union in the face of the worker dislocation and unemployment that is bound to result from economic restructuring. This is, therefore, a political vacuum at the time when Poland desperately needs strong leadership: Solidarity is legitimate but not in power and the

⁴¹ Information Memorandum from Brent Scowcroft to President Bush, “Scope Paper—Your Visit to Poland.” June 29, 1989, George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1998-0194-F by the National Security Archive [original in Condoleezza Rice Files, President’s Trip to Poland/Hungary 7/89 (1c)].

regime is in power but not legitimate. The low voter turnout for the freest election in postwar Poland served notice on both the regime and the opposition that the population's patience with perpetual economic crisis is wearing thin.

Tenor and Objectives: Your visit is meant to demonstrate U.S. support for incipient democratic processes in Poland and to underscore the West's commitment to helping the Poles through the difficult times ahead. Other Western leaders have been and are planning to go to Poland but it is not an exaggeration to say that Poles look first and foremost to America and thus to you as a beacon of hope. This leads to high expectations of what the United States can do to help. Your public statements will stress our willingness to help while exhorting the Poles to help themselves.

The high point of your activities in Warsaw will be your speech before the Polish Parliament, the first such occasion in the postwar era. ~~You will not make many more important foreign policy speeches than this one in your presidency.~~⁴²

Your meetings are designed to recognize the unique contributions of Jaruzelski and the regime on the one hand and Solidarity on the other. Several Western leaders have hailed Jaruzelski as a Polish Patriot—a description this is too far for us to go to. But he is most certainly a man who, perhaps focused on his place in history, understands the necessity of compromise. It was, after all, Jaruzelski who threatened to resign if the Party did not permit the Roundtable negotiations to take place.

In Gdansk, the birthplace of Solidarity, you will meet with Lech Walesa [sic] who is at once charismatic and pragmatic. Walesa is by far the most popular political figure in Poland. He is reluctant to play an overtly political role but his clout is badly needed if Poland is to begin the difficult and unpopular economic reforms ahead. Your private luncheon with him may provide an opportunity to discuss how he sees his role in the difficult years ahead.

As you heard from the Polish-Americans in the Roosevelt Room, the regime and Solidarity are united by one overarching preoccupation—economic assistance—and will press you, publicly and privately, to extend further financial assistance and to plead Poland's case for lenient terms with the IMP, the World Bank and the Paris Club. You may also find officials anxious to discuss your CFE proposal. The Poles see CFE as a mechanism to reduce their military burden while remaining in the Warsaw Pact.

The message that you bring to the Poles will be watched throughout Eastern Europe, particularly in Hungary. But even Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Bulgaria, which have resisted reform, are aware that you have succeeded in forging a common strategy for the West that links economic assistance to fundamental economic and political reform. The promise of Western help is not enough now to stir the recalcitrant regimes but it is certainly a factor in their calculations of

⁴² Sentence crossed out in the original document. [Editors]

their political and economic future. The division of Europe began with the failure to hold free elections in Poland. More than forty years later the promise of overcoming that division rests heavily with the first signs of democracy's return to Poland. As Walter Cronkite used to say, you are there.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1998-0194-F by the National Security Archive [original in Condoleezza Rice Files, President's Trip to Poland/Hungary 7/89]

Document No. 76: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

July 21, 1989

During President Bush's trip to Europe, he visited Poland and Hungary and had a chance to see with his own eyes how quickly events were changing the European landscape. Gorbachev, meanwhile, had two triumphant visits to Germany and to France, where he met with leaders and gave a major address to the Council of Europe on his vision of a "common European home." Before this moment, there was practically no direct communication between the U.S. and the Soviet leaders. Europeans strongly encouraged Bush to meet with Gorbachev personally. This letter, written by Bush personally, gives a good example of Bush's voice. He is very cautious, but at the same time sounds very sensitive to Gorbachev's concerns, suggesting that they meet without any agenda and in fact "avoid the word 'summit' which is, at best, overworked and, at worst, a word whose connotation is one of a momentous happening." Bush certainly did not envision any major breakthroughs but was concerned that not meeting with Gorbachev for so long, while the Soviet leader was becoming so popular and a frequent visitor to European capitals, could hurt him politically. He suggests a low-key meeting in connection with Gorbachev's visit to the U.N. General Assembly in September.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing this letter to you on my way back from Europe to the United States. My mind is full of the fascinating conversations that I had with people in Hungary and Poland and with the many world leaders gathered in Paris for France's bicentennial.

Let me get quickly to the point of this letter. I would like very much to sit down soon and talk to you, if you are agreeable to the idea. I want to do it without thousands of assistants hovering over our shoulders, without the ever-present briefing papers and certainly without the press yelling at us every 5 minutes about "who's winning," "what agreements have been reached," or "has our meeting succeeded or failed."

Up until now I have felt that a meeting would have to produce major agreements so as not to disappoint the watching world. Now my thinking is changing.

Perhaps it was my visit to Poland and Hungary or perhaps it is what I heard about your recent visits to France and Germany—whatever the cause—I just want to reduce the chances there could be misunderstandings between us. I want to get our relationship on a more personal basis. If you agree that an unstructured meeting would be productive, I would make the following suggestion.

My suggestion is that you decide, on your own, to come to speak at the U.N. early in the General Assembly session—perhaps around the end of September (the 27th and 28th of September would be perfect for me, but so would other

dates). Immediately following your public announcement that you were coming to the United Nations, I would invite you to come to meet with me for an informal, “no agenda” visit. In my view, it would be preferable to avoid the word “summit” which is, at best, overworked and, at worst, a word whose connotation is one of a momentous happening.

I would propose inviting you to visit me for a day or two of private chats.

There are two alternative ways I would suggest to do this. One way would be for you to fly from New York to Washington where I would meet you at Andrews Air Force Base. We could then go by helicopter to Camp David. There, in a relaxed setting with neckties off, we could talk about any and all subjects. The very nature of the invitation would guard against the danger of “overpromise.” I would propose no more than a handful of advisers on each side. I would visualize long chats between you and me alone and, also, good discussions with my Secretary of State, NSC Adviser, and Chief of Staff present, along with their counterparts, of course.

Another option would be for you to visit Barbara and me at our seaside house in Maine. Late September can be very nice there. You could fly to Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire, about 40 minutes from New York and helicopter another 15 minutes to our home, for the same kind of talks.

Camp David perhaps would offer the most privacy, but Maine would offer you a glimpse of our Atlantic sea-coast. It would also give me a chance to take you for a ride in my speed boat and maybe catch a fish.

Perhaps there is some entirely different way more convenient for you, and I would welcome a suggestion. The General Assembly seems to me to provide the ideal cover needed for a “spontaneous” invitation to an unstructured, informal meeting. I do not intend in any way to put you in an awkward position and I will understand completely if, for whatever reason, you do not feel you can respond positively to my suggestion.

General Brent Scowcroft and Secretary Jim Baker, plus my Chief of Staff John Sununu, are the *only* ones who know of this letter, which I have personally written. I hope I can demonstrate to you that some things need not “leak.”

My respects and sincere regards,

Sincerely,

George Bush

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 77: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Shevardnadze, Washington, 2:00 p.m. – 3:05 p.m.

September 21, 1989

The American president receives the Soviet foreign minister at the White House, just two months after making up his mind to reach out to Gorbachev for a personal meeting (see previous document). Unmentioned here is Shevardnadze's annoyance that Scowcroft passed the invitation letter through Marshal Akhromeyev, who happened to be visiting Washington in late July, rather than through the Foreign Ministry. But now the diplomats are back in charge. Shevardnadze is on his way to Wyoming for what would be a bonding experience with Secretary of State Baker (including fly-fishing together) at the latter's ranch near Grand Teton National Park. This relatively short memcon provides a summary, in effect, for the dozens of pages of transcripts from Shevardnadze's sit-downs with Baker in Wyoming. Shevardnadze mentions the nationalities problem in the USSR, just then cresting with mass demonstrations in the Baltics on the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and gives the Americans an overview of perestroika and Gorbachev's general program. What is most important here are Bush's repeated expressions of support for perestroika, his compliments ("We think the Soviet leadership has handled the Polish situation admirably"), and his engagement on arms control, which is Gorbachev's priority—or as Shevardnadze comments, "the main theme" of Gorbachev's letter that the foreign minister is presenting to the Americans. Shevardnadze has come to Washington with concessions, such as agreeing not to count conventionally armed bombers in the negotiated START ceilings, and with proposals, such as eliminating short-range nuclear weapons and banning fissionable materials. He would continue the "arms race in reverse" discussion in Wyoming, but there would be resistance on the U.S. side, for example, against "the effort to rid the seas of nuclear weapons."

The President: Let me welcome you to the United States. I am delighted with the letter from President Gorbachev and was very pleased to receive it. There is a great deal of interest across the country in your visit. I am pleased that you and Secretary Baker can continue your dialogue. We are very pleased with the preparations for this visit.

I feel in a personal sense that I have a good relationship with President Gorbachev. We feel nothing but affection and warmth for him and I want him to understand this at a personal level. I hope he knows I want to accelerate this relationship. I can comment on your arms control proposals and Secretary Baker will later faithfully represent my views. There are no serious elements in the U.S. that want Soviet reforms to fail. Please reaffirm that to President Gorbachev, although I hope it is not necessary. We support perestroika and we do not want to complicate your reform efforts. In New York, President Gorbachev said some elements in the United States did not want perestroika to succeed. That does not

include either me or my Administration. Please tell him that. We have confidence in him, and please do not place great weight on the gloomy forecasts sometimes heard in both our countries. The important thing is that the reforms continue. Between us, President Gorbachev and I can create a whole new fabric of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of all my colleagues I would like to greet you here in the White House. This is my first meeting with you as President. You have made a personal contribution to U.S.-Soviet relations. I would like to convey to you most warm greetings from President Gorbachev and the leaders of the Soviet Union. I recall the meeting and good talk I had with you when were Vice President, during the election campaign. The thoughts you expressed were captured in the phrase, "the new closeness." This fully reflects our concept of U.S.-Soviet relations at the current stage.

During the last few years we have gone through an important period of establishing a level of mutual understanding. Having this positive experience in building our relationship, we can move to partnership where possible, and we are ready for this further stage. The INF treaty and the steps forward in bilateral relations, such as over 40 bilateral agreements signed in the last few years, demonstrate how far our relations, including people to people contacts, have come.

We can be bolder. There has been an erosion in both of our countries in the image of the enemy. The atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet relations is quite different than when I became Foreign Minister four years ago, when the tone was so confrontational. Now, we are planning a joint statement on human rights. The Soviet Union is moving toward the highest standards in this area and we appreciate your support for holding the CSCE human rights conference in Moscow. The Supreme Soviet will soon adopt new legislation on entry into and exit out of the U.S.S.R.

You spoke warmly of President Gorbachev. I would like to stress the important political asset represented in your personal relationship with President Gorbachev. Nothing must spoil or poison this trust.

I would not wish to idealize our relationship, but one truth is elementary. Relations between states can only develop if there is domestic stability. Therefore, we appreciate the high degree of U.S. interest in democratization and renewal in the U.S.S.R. We have reassessed and condemned our previous policies quite a bit recently, but we will not wipe out or negate the accomplishments of the decades of our country. There are tragic events in our past which are difficult to explain. But the historical goal we have traversed is glorious and only on the basis of these accomplishments can we move forward on reform. We must not forget our two countries together saved world civilization in the Great Patriotic War. There is no alternative to perestroika. We have just completed a Central Committee plenum on the nationalities problem, a painful problem. We are a union of 15 states, as stated in our constitution, which poses special problems. We believe we have now adopted policies that ensure each state will be self-governing, and that will

restore stability. We are creating a new political culture and we have made mistakes. But we do not see anything bad about this expanding political awareness. People in the Soviet Union are in favor of perestroika, although there are conservatives who oppose it. But our people believe in perestroika, want perestroika, and this process cannot be reversed.

It is not easy to develop our new laws on the economy, including those on cooperatives—which produced 6 billion rubles of goods last year. We are trying to reduce the incompatibility of our economy with those in the West. Thus, we have emphasized joint ventures, 1500 in all and 80 with the United States. I call your attention to all this work on our economic legislation because these developments should allow more economic interaction between us. We are not asking for aid from you. We want only equal cooperation. We have no doubt, to conclude, that perestroika will succeed. I know some of my friends say we have 5 months, or 1 year, or 18 months and then we will collapse. This is not a serious view. I know my country, and predictions of catastrophe for perestroika are not serious at all. We will succeed.

Let me say a few words about President Gorbachev's letter. In the past several months, we have moved forward in arms control. But the goal of 50% reductions in START remains to be achieved. The main theme in President Gorbachev's letter is that we must remove obstacles to agreement in Geneva on strategic arms. You were right when you said in your letter of June 20 that there is a conceptual gap on the ABM issue. We should stick to the Washington formulation and return to the subject after a START treaty is concluded. We will have to decide what is permissible under the ABM Treaty. Research and testing could be permitted except for ABM components. We would not insist on a fixed period for non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Our political decision to eliminate the Krasnoyarsk radar site demonstrates our commitment to the ABM Treaty.

One important question remains and I would like to speak frankly. A year ago, your scientists visited the Krasnoyarsk radar. It would be good if our experts could visit your radars in Greenland and the United Kingdom.

On the issue of SLCMs, the question is different. Important political decisions need to be taken. We should look at this problem in a broader way, in the effort to rid the seas of nuclear weapons. We hope you will join us in this effort. We should concentrate on verification, without which no progress is possible. A limit on SLCMs could be set by means of mutual obligations which would be made in connection with the treaty, but outside of it.

On ALCMs and heavy bombers, we are ready not to count B-52s and other aircraft that are conventionally armed within the 1600 limit. These aircraft would be counted outside the 1600, perhaps with a limit of 100. The U.S. side should then accept a realistic counting of ALCMs and reaffirm a 600 kilometer range cut-off in defining such systems. There should be interim work on verification measures, as you have proposed, but covering all strategic offensive arms. We have the same approach to data exchanges. We hope to sign an agreement with notifications for strategic exercises.

We do not see any insurmountable obstacles to agreement on nuclear testing, based on work already done. Work should be completed at the end of this year and can be signed at the Summit.

We would like to ban fissionable material. I will discuss this with Secretary Baker.

On chemical weapons, we should speed up work on a convention banning CW. Your personal interest and that of President Gorbachev will assist that effort. It would be good for us to set a target date to complete a treaty, in 1990 or 1991.

On CFE, I will discuss this with Secretary Baker. We think we can get results, as you have suggested, in 6–12 months. We are ready to work together with you. We would like to have the 35 CSCE Foreign Ministers meet in 1990 to work on a treaty and, by the end of the year, hold a Summit to sign the agreement.

In order to accelerate work in Vienna, we need to start negotiations on short-range nuclear forces. Conditions are ripe for such discussions. We could start moving toward elimination of these weapons.

We are interested in your Open Skies plan. We shall participate in an international conference on this subject. We have some suggestions that we will put forward in Wyoming.

Concerning regional problems, there is a great range of possibilities for cooperation: Lebanon, the Middle East, Central America, Asia, Cyprus, and other problems. I would like to discuss with Secretary Baker the situation in and around Afghanistan. This is very important to us.

To conclude, Secretary Baker and I have already had useful meetings this year. We have developed a frank, businesslike relationship that makes it possible to discuss all complex problems and move toward solutions.

The President: Thank you. I was hoping to hear such a broad treatment of the issues. On the regional issues, President Carter was here this morning discussing the upcoming elections in Nicaragua. The question of Nicaragua is a thorn in the side of our bilateral relationship. I want Secretary Baker to discuss this with you in detail in Wyoming. On the subject of Afghanistan, we have no interest in seeing an anti-Soviet regime installed in Kabul. Secretary Baker will elaborate on this. We should be able to find a solution to the Afghan problem. We need to make progress.

On conventional forces, I am pleased with the Soviet willingness to see positive aspects in the NATO proposal. We want to move forward, keep the momentum. An early CFE agreement would be good.

On START, we, despite what columnists here say, are interested in an early agreement that enhances stability and will reduce the risk of war. You are not going up against a stone wall in START. We are ready to move. Secretary Baker will go into this more later.

Secretary Baker: I think the letter from President Gorbachev is interesting, but it does raise questions we will want to go into detail on in Wyoming.

The President: On DST; a START treaty should not be held hostage to an agreement on Defense and Space, negotiations which should stand on their own.

I appreciate what you said on chemical weapons and this is an area on which we must find a solution. Secretary Baker will discuss a new CW initiative on our part. If we can reach a CW agreement, we will greatly reduce our stockpile. Secretary Baker will give you the details. As we lead up to full ban, we can make major reductions in our respective stockpiles.

I also appreciate your position on Open Skies. Secretary Baker will go into this in more detail.

On the issue of nuclear testing, we have made good progress on verification, and I think decisions on our side will push forward the negotiations and allow us to finalize the nuclear testing treaties in the near future.

Turning to the subject of perestroika, we are fascinated by the process of reform in your country. We have great respect for the principle of cultural autonomy. We are sensitive to the changes going on in the U.S.S.R. I do not want our interest, however, to be misunderstood, to complicate developments in the Soviet Union. This is a delicate issue, and needs to be handled carefully.

It is important that you and Secretary Baker have a good, frank discussion about Eastern Europe. We think the Soviet leadership has handled the Polish situation admirably. We hope you feel the same way about our policy. We want to support changes toward democracy in Eastern Europe, but do not want to be reckless or silly about it. We also admire your policy approach toward Hungary. On Eastern Europe, I want us to be in such close touch that we do not misunderstand each other's intentions.

We need to work on mutual problems together. I would love to hear your view on Cuba and Castro, who is so far behind the power curve.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I cannot promise that, but I will discuss Nicaragua, where I will stop after New York. This will be my first visit to Nicaragua, the first by a Soviet Foreign Minister. We want a free, fair election and the Nicaraguan leaders want that too. I want to say we are not sending weapons to Nicaragua. We gave our word and we have kept it. Before the election, there will be no arms supplies to Nicaragua.

The President: I hope you will have a good talk with Secretary Baker on this problem. We are troubled by the flow of substantial arms shipments into Nicaragua. The arms are coming from somewhere. I do not question what you say, but we need to talk in detail with you about this.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: It is one thing when a journalist makes such a charge, another when a U.S. official makes such a charge. We keep our word.

Secretary Baker: You need to tell us who that official was and when the charge was made. The level of East bloc shipments to Nicaragua has increased and that is what we have said. If we said it was Soviet arms, then please give us chapter and verse.

The President: We can iron this out, but we are concerned. The total amount of Bloc arms supplies to Nicaragua has increased.

Secretary Baker: In a spirit of candor, we think arms are coming through Cuba and are East Bloc, including Soviet, in origin.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I have no reason to suspect the Cubans but, in any event, the Soviet Union cannot be held responsible for all countries with whom we have good relations.

The President: We appreciate your coming. You and Secretary Baker have much to talk about.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA in 2009 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 78: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

November 22, 1989

Bush informs Gorbachev about the subjects he would like to raise at Malta, while stressing that U.S. expectations are quite low. In fact, the meeting was not expected to result in any breakthroughs or signed agreements. Among the president's priorities are developments in Eastern Europe and Central America. Arms control is the area in which the Soviets are ready to make significant progress and expect Bush to pick up where his predecessor left off, particularly on the START Treaty and disarmament in Europe. However, Bush's letter specifies that arms control will only be treated in a "broad, general sense." Bush advises that there will be no "December surprises" from the U.S. side. We now know from U.S. preparatory materials that the Americans were actually concerned about surprises from the Soviets. On November 17, long-time SALT negotiator and retired Army General Ed Rowny sent the president a memo that in a starkly negative tone dismissed the need to respond to Gorbachev's arms control proposals. Rowny recommended that "[i]f Gorbachev says that Malta should move arms control forward, we should focus the discussion on process and not engage on substance. ..." Since "there are potential risks and few gains in discussing START," various potential Gorbachev offers such as "moratoria on fissionable materials and production of strategic weapons" "are all losers for us," and naval arms control is a "no-win situation."⁴³

Dear Mr. President,

After talking with Anatoli Dobrinin yesterday it occurred to me that even though we have a "no agenda" meeting you might be interested in some of the topics I would like to cover. What I set out below is not meant in any way to limit our discussions; but here is my list—a non-inclusive list.

- A. Eastern Europe.
- B. Regional differences. Central America, Angola, Afghanistan, Asia (Cambodia) & Middle East.
- C. The defense spending of both our countries—what effect will changing times have on levels of defense spending?
- D. Your vision and mine of the world 10 years from now. What are the differences when you say "Common European Home" and I say "Europe Whole & Free"?
- E. Human Rights.
- F. Arms Control—philosophy and objectives—treating this in a broad, general sense.

⁴³ Information Memorandum to Secretary Baker from Gen. Edward L. Rowny, November 17, 1989, U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.

Of course, you will have your own priorities. I would like to hear from you your expectations for ‘perestroika’—where does it lead down the road?

I want this meeting to be useful in advancing our mutual understanding and in laying the ground-work for a good relationship. Success does not mean deals signed, in my view. It means that you and I are frank enough with each other so that our two great countries will not have tensions that arise because we don’t know each other’s innermost thinking.

I will be working next week to flesh out our side’s thinking but there will be no ‘December Surprise’. If however there is some proposal not covered by the list above, I will be prepared to make it.

I am writing this on the eve of our Thanksgiving Day—a day in which all Americans thank God for our blessings.

I will give thanks for the fact that we are living in times of enormous promise. I will give thanks that our 5 kids and our 11 grandchildren might just have a real chance to grow up in a more peaceful, less scary world.

I will give thanks that you are pressing forward with glasnost and perestroika; for, you see, the fate of my own family and yours is dependent on perestroika’s success.

I look forward to seeing you.

With Respect,
George Bush

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library.*]

Document No. 79: Memorandum from Baker for the President,
“Your December Meeting with Gorbachev”

November 29, 1989

This five-page memo from President Bush’s most trusted, long-time friend and adviser provides a scene-setter and a provisional script for the president to use with Gorbachev. Baker’s summary details the very limited expectations on the American side for the Malta meeting, namely “to gain a clearer understanding” and to “probe Gorbachev’s thinking” while kicking the major issues down the road to a full-scale summit in 1990. Interestingly, Baker makes a point of spotlighting in the first paragraph the administration’s underlying public relations concern about Gorbachev’s popularity and criticisms of Bush’s “pause.”

I. SETTING

The Mediterranean encounter will be an important opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of where Gorbachev intends to take the USSR, how his foreign policy priorities relate to his domestic objectives, and the nature of his vision for Europe in the 1990s. It will also be an occasion to lay down markers on the obstacles we see to improved U.S.-Soviet relations and to set priorities for the 1990 Summit. Further, Malta could promote a public sense, here and abroad, of a new pace and purpose to the U.S-Soviet dialogue with you leading as much as Gorbachev.

Gorbachev’s Agenda

You requested, and the Soviets accepted, an open-ended and unstructured agenda for Malta. But it’s quite possible Gorbachev will bring some attention-grabbing initiatives. We’ll want to respond in ways that keep the focus on our agenda.

Gorbachev comes to Malta facing massive economic and social problems on the home front. But, paradoxically, his political position within the Soviet leadership appears stronger than ever. His preoccupation with the fate of perestroika will drive his approach to Soviet security, foreign policy and economic interests.

Gorbachev also faces an increasingly uncertain situation in Eastern Europe, where he will seek reassurances about our intentions and signal opposition to German reunification. He may try to “leap-frog” the situation by proposing new ideas that speed the pace of military withdrawal, or novel political solutions to the architecture of Europe (e.g. a peace treaty on Germany or a Helsinki II) that could unsettle our allies. And his proposal to disband NATO and the Warsaw Pact may well come up again.

Gorbachev will want to accelerate progress on his two priority areas for the 1990 summit: arms control and economic relations. He may have a surprise arms control proposal, perhaps on naval forces (given the venue), but he is very unlikely to try to turn Malta into a full-scale bargaining session like Reykjavik. In the economic area, Gorbachev will seek progress on trade restrictions, commercial relations, and Soviet admission to the GATT and the international financial institutions.

II. U.S. OBJECTIVES

Our objectives can be divided into several broad categories:

(A) *Perestroika and Economics*: to discuss perestroika in the USSR and how Gorbachev sees its prospects and challenges. In this regard, you will have to respond to a likely Gorbachev push on bilateral economic relations, making clear that we are ready to move on a trade agreement and, once conditions merit a Jackson-Vanik waiver, also on lending restrictions like the Stevenson Amendment. You should tell Gorbachev of our readiness to recommend Soviet observer status in the GATT after the Uruguay Round ends in 1990, if the Supreme Soviet moves by then toward introducing market pricing for wholesale goods. We also want to explore avenues for technical cooperation.

(B) *Change in Europe*: to probe Gorbachev's thinking on the transformations underway in Eastern Europe, stressing our interest in stability through peaceful, democratic change.

(C) *"New Thinking" and Regional Conflicts*: to underscore our concern about the contradiction between professed Soviet support for peaceful settlements and actual Soviet conduct.

(D) *Summit Stage-setting*: to set priorities that frame the agenda for the 1990 summit, including on arms control.

III. OUR STRATEGY

Perestroika in the USSR

You will want to gauge Gorbachev's views on the prospects and challenges of perestroika, both in the economic and political fields. Economics will have a higher profile at Malta than at any meeting in a decade. At a minimum, Gorbachev will play on sympathy for the enormity of his task to seek bilateral trade and commercial concessions, and movement on GATT and COCOM. He could adopt a more sweeping strategy aimed at immediate and full Soviet membership in the world economy. At the extreme, he might call for Soviet participation in the next Economic Summit (which you will host).

Whatever the Soviet strategy, you could propose starting negotiations on a commercial agreement, once a new emigration law is passed. This would make it possible to accommodate Gorbachev's interest in signing a trade agreement and

receiving MFN status at the 1990 summit, while safeguarding our human rights concerns (the period of negotiations would give us time to judge the effect of the new Soviet emigration law). In addition—or in response to a broader Soviet initiative—you can point to the various steps we proposed at the November Joint Commercial Commission (working groups on trade and investment agreements) as signs of our willingness to cooperate.

Soviet officials bridle at the notion of any government offering them “technical assistance.” I suggest you speak instead of “technical cooperation” in presenting the array of programs on management training, the U.S. tax, budget and banking systems, and U.S. stock exchanges, that we could offer. We have invited, at the request of Prime Minister Ryzhkov, the heads of the Soviet Ministry of Finance and the State Bank to Washington next month, so the Soviets should be receptive to proposals in this area.

While democratization is moving forward in the USSR, it has unleashed some dynamic forces that are beyond Gorbachev’s ability to control. The meeting’s informal nature makes it ideal for discussing Soviet domestic affairs. You should expect Gorbachev to pursue these topics eagerly, in the belief that self-criticism is an effective means of heightening U.S. sympathy for the fate of perestroika.

The Baltic States, and ethnic ferment in the Caucasus, are likely to be the most sensitive topics discussed. You should tell Gorbachev we stand by our non-recognition policy on the Baltics and flag our intention of thickening our relations with the Baltic peoples. But you should emphasize that we are not out to destabilize the USSR and that we do not have a preconceived notion of what arrangements the Baltic states might arrive at through a democratic process of self-determination.

Change in Europe

A key objective at Malta is to gain a clearer fix on Gorbachev’s approach to Eastern Europe, and how the Soviets are redefining their strategic interests. You will need to make clear from the beginning that we are not interested in negotiating any “deal” or even ground rules for our relations with sovereign states. You will also want to stress our interest in reform through a peaceful, democratic process, and to remind Gorbachev that a violent crackdown (in Eastern Europe as well as the USSR) would inevitably harm our relations. We must be wary of “new ideas” coming from the Soviet side, for Gorbachev may seek our blessing or tacit acquiescence for policies designed to heighten Moscow’s control over the situation in Eastern Europe, or to involve us in commitments that they will not, or that we cannot, sustain.

Gorbachev’s strategy of promoting the stable international environment necessary for perestroika is threatened by the accelerating political changes now affecting every country in the region except Romania. Moscow’s assumptions about reform in Eastern Europe—that it would result in gradual, controlled change, and that cohesion of the Warsaw Pact could be maintained long enough

to allow the Soviets to restructure relations with the East Europeans—are increasingly in doubt. As a result, Gorbachev will be seeking new assurances that we will not exploit developments at the expense of Soviet security. You can extend general reassurances, but be wary of appearing to bless in advance a Soviet crackdown.

“New Thinking” and Regional Conflicts

You should underscore our concern about the large gap between Moscow’s rhetorical support for peaceful settlements and the actual Soviet conduct we see in specific regions. You should emphasize the importance of Soviet restraint in this area to the overall health of the relationship; if we cannot make more progress on these questions, it could have a dampening effect on other aspects of the relationship. Indeed, you might even indicate that our ability to move beyond “technical cooperation” in our economic relationship will depend on better performance on regional issues, particularly Central America. The Soviets have accepted free choice and self-determination as the only possible basis for stability in Eastern Europe. These principles need to be applied to Third World regional conflicts as well; unless there are legitimate regimes in place, troubled areas of the world will never know stability.

You should stress that Soviet credibility is on the line in ensuring a free and fair election in Nicaragua and tell Gorbachev flatly that the Soviets cannot escape responsibility for Cuba’s actions. You might consider cutting through our recent arguments on arms to Nicaragua and the FMLN by suggesting a new bottom line: a substantial reduction in Soviet arms shipments to Havana. In this context you should note our concern over the ill-timed and unjustified delivery of MIG-29s.

Gorbachev is certain to accuse the U.S. of ignoring Soviet concerns on Afghanistan. You can respond by building on the concept of a transition period (which was in the Wyoming joint statement). You might press him to offer a plan for a transition period, which we could present to the mujahedin if it is sufficiently realistic. You could also indicate that once we begin to move toward a settlement, we are prepared to discuss a joint cut-off of arms shipments (negative symmetry).

Summit Stage-setting

Without plowing through every item on the five-part agenda, you will want to lay out U.S. priorities and some realistic objectives for the 1990 Summit, particularly on arms control:

- On nuclear testing, you and Gorbachev should reaffirm that you expect to sign the TTBT and PNET protocols at the 1990 Summit.

- To give impetus to your CW initiative, you could inform Gorbachev that the U.S. has ready a draft agreement on bilateral stockpile destruction, and state that you see this as a possible signature item for the 1990 summit. (To do this, we would have to resolve quickly the interagency difference over the form of such an agreement.)
- In START, you can say the U.S. would like to resolve all major START issues by or at the 1990 Summit, and will make every effort to conclude a treaty by that time.

While CFE is multilateral, you will want to sustain pressure to wrap up a treaty in 1990. Gorbachev may press for a schedule of NATO-Warsaw Pact ministerial and summit-level meetings to hasten completion. You might respond that we are prepared to consider signing a CFE agreement at a multilateral summit, but not to set dates now. A more forward-leaning approach would be to agree to consult with the allies on the proposal to set a date for a Summit CFE signing.

The U.S. public will want you to send Gorbachev the message that we remain serious about human rights progress, regardless of the other pressures he is facing. While applauding Soviet advances to date, you should note that more needs to be done. This includes resolution of some still-outstanding divided family and *refusenik* cases, as well as future progress toward the institutionalization of reform in Soviet law.

You will also want to set priorities in the transnational area (particularly on cooperation on the environment) and in bilateral matters (agreement to our Open Lands proposal and movement on Embassy construction). If the situation warrants, you might play on the theme of expanding access to one another's societies by suggesting you and he address one another's peoples directly via television on a periodic basis, and that our countries consider opening small consulates or cultural centers in additional cities.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2005-0965-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 80: Record of Conversation between Gorbachev and John Paul II

December 1, 1989

On the way to the Malta summit, Mikhail Gorbachev stops in Vatican City for a historic meeting with Pope John Paul II, the Polish pontiff from Krakow, who has been such an inspiration to the Solidarity movement. This marks only the second time a Russian leader has met with a Pope, the first being between Tsar Nicholas I and Pope Gregory XVI in 1845. Here, the Soviet leader and his wife, Raisa, would hear the Vatican band performing first the Internationale and then the Papal Hymn. In their conversation, transcribed from notes by Aleksandr Yakovlev, the Pope raises concerns about religious freedom in the Soviet Union and the Vatican's relations with various Orthodox and Catholic denominations, while the Soviet leader talks about the issues he plans to discuss with President Bush at Malta, such as the concept of universal human values and his distaste for the phrase "Western values." The Pope responds by saying he shares Gorbachev's vision, especially as far as values are concerned—"[i]t would be wrong for someone to claim that changes in Europe and the world should follow the Western model. This goes against my deep convictions. Europe, as a participant in world history, should breathe with two lungs."

For the first several minutes the conversation was one-on-one (without interpreters).

Gorbachev: I would like to say that I appreciate your words at the beginning of the conversation regarding the fact that this is a meeting of two Slavic people, among other things. I don't mean to appear as a pan-Slavist, but I believe in the mission of Slavic people to strengthen the understanding of human values of life, peace, and goodness everywhere.

John Paul II: Yes, this is so. Peace and goodness. [...]

Gorbachev: We already have an agreement to eliminate one type of nuclear weapon. There is a real possibility of reducing strategic weapons by 50 percent. I will discuss this with President Bush. The Hungarian talks are in progress. Even generals have begun to meet with one another. In other words, the world is changing.

I must say, Your Holiness, that I am astonished by the people's reaction to our proposals and thoughts. We are not so ambitious as to consider ourselves the vessels of some higher form of salvation. Our new European "credo" is to invite others to think about how to build a better world together. One must not claim to know the absolute truth and try to impose it on others. For example, our Western partners, including the U.S. administration, declare that they support *perestroika*. It is true that the majority of the public and politicians support it. But it is already being said that Europe should only be renewed on the basis of Western values

and anything differing from these values should be cut off. This is no way to treat nations, their history, traditions, and identities.

In the past, the Soviet Union was accused of exporting revolution. Now some people are trying to export other values. This is not the path we should be taking. It reminds me of religious wars of the past. We must have learned something since then.

As for religious issues, we treat them within the framework of our general understanding of universal human values. In this matter, as in others, the people are the highest authority. Everything depends on the choice of the people. It is up to the individual which philosophy and religion to practice. I think we have reached the point where we can build relations between nations and between people on the basis of respect.

At one point President Reagan tried instructing me how to conduct matters in our country. I told him that we could not have a conversation like that. A conversation can only happen on the basis of realism and mutual respect. I told him: you are not a teacher and I am not a student. You are not a prosecutor and I am not a defendant. So if we want to talk about politics, about how to change the world for the better, then we have to do it as equals. He understood this and we were able to do what we did.

I know that you welcomed the results of that dialogue, and I highly value your support. We plan to work with the current administration using the same principles. Each side should be able to maintain its own independence while respecting the traditions of the other side. Universal human values should become the primary goal, but the choices of this or that political system should be left to the people.

Today we face the serious problem of survival. This includes the threat of nuclear weapons, ecological issues, natural resources, the information [revolution], and the scientific and technological revolution, which not only brings progress, but also complications. These are all global, universal problems. We must acknowledge them, they cannot be ignored. We have to understand these problems in order to change our way of thinking and, consequently, our policies. We have to shift from confrontation to collaboration. This will be a long and difficult road, but I do not agree with our country's pessimists.

John Paul II: Neither do I.

Gorbachev: Our planet is overwhelmed with many concerns. However, if we join forces, we have a great opportunity to move in the right direction and build a new world on the basis of universal values.

You mentioned problems in the Third World. I also want to talk about them. We cannot be content while millions of people are living in conditions of abject poverty, hunger, and destitution. I am familiar with your speeches on this subject. Our views coincide. [...]

I would also like to say that issues in your homeland—Poland—are very close to me. In recent years I have done, and will continue to do, everything I can to ensure good relations between Poland, Russia and the Soviet Union.

John Paul II: I thank you on behalf of my homeland.

Gorbachev: [...] There are major changes in other countries as well. On this note, I would like to discuss one more point: Western politicians should take a responsible approach to these changes. They are too important to be treated otherwise. If they succeed, the world will change. Right now there is the option of starting on the path of good development, even though it might be a difficult one. I think the majority of politicians truly understand this. [...]

John Paul II: I am grateful to you for sharing your thoughts on international issues. Naturally, we primarily touched upon European and to some extent North American problems. But there are other parts of the world where the situation is troubling.

I am particularly concerned about the situation in Lebanon and, in general, the Middle East; also to some degree in Indo-China and Central America. Overall, there are quite a few places in the world with difficulties. Perhaps we could act together on this front. In these matters, the Church and the Pope can only represent the moral aspect. It would be good to help these nations to overcome the tragic situations in which they find themselves through political means.

I am thankful to you for your discussion of *perestroika*. We are watching it from outside. You, Mr. President, carry it inside you, in your heart and in your deeds. I think we understood correctly that the strength of *perestroika* is in its soul. You are right when you say that changes should not come too fast. We also agree that not only structures need to be changed, but the thinking as well.

It would be wrong for someone to claim that changes in Europe and the world should follow the Western model. This goes against my deep convictions. Europe, as a participant in world history, should breathe with two lungs.

Gorbachev: This is a very appropriate vision. [...]

[Source: *State Archive of the Russian Federation [GARF], Moscow. Yakovlev Collection, Fond 10063, Opis 1, Delo 394. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 81: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Gorbachev,
First Expanded Bilateral Meeting, Malta, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

December 2, 1989

Nasty weather at Malta played havoc with the plans of the advance teams. High waves and winds even inside Valleta harbor meant that, instead of shuttling the leaders and the delegations back and forth between the respective countries' battle cruisers (the Slava and the Belknap), this first meeting and all subsequent sessions took place on the Soviet cruise liner Maxim Gorky, safely tied to the dock. According to the American memorandum of conversation (only declassified in 2008, some 15 years after the Gorbachev Foundation published the Soviet transcript), President Bush launches into his NSC-prepared talking points, which have the desired atmospheric effect. Gorbachev remarks almost bemusedly that now he sees the American administration has (finally) made up its mind what to do, and that it includes taking "specific steps" or at least "plans for such steps" to support perestroika, rather than to doubt it.

When Bush finishes with his "non-agenda," as he calls it, Gorbachev refers to his own 3x2 inch orange notebook and launches into a philosophical discussion, arguing that the "methods of the Cold War" have been "defeated" and thus the U.S. and USSR "are doomed to cooperate for a long time, but we have to abandon the vestiges of images of an enemy." Gorbachev compliments Bush for not engaging in Cold War thinking or profiting from the changes in Eastern Europe. Bush responds with a revealing comment: "I have been called cautious or timid. I am cautious, but not timid. But I have conducted myself in ways not to complicate your life. That's why I have not jumped up and down on the Berlin Wall."

Gorbachev reacts positively to each of Bush's overtures on arms control, chemical weapons, conventional forces, future summits and so forth, but pushes back on the American leader's Cuba and Central America focus.

The President: General Scowcroft said that his conversation with General Akhromeyev was the best that he had ever had with a Soviet official.

Chairman Gorbachev: Our meeting was at your initiative. It is for me to begin and welcome you and your close associates. The first thing to do is to note and appreciate your initiative to hold this meeting. Initially, I wondered why you wanted this meeting, but now I know that a lot is happening. That is the most important thing. We have to find a dialogue commensurate with the pace of change. We need more working contacts. Since the changes underway affect fundamental things, even Ministerial contacts are not enough now. You and I have to be more active in developing personal contacts. This must be regarded as a prelude to the official Summit, but this meeting will have an importance of its own.

The President: I agree.

Chairman Gorbachev: I like informal meetings. I think we need more than correspondence. We need to talk to each other. Both for the U.S. and the USSR,

and for the world, this meeting is more than just a symbol. Our people are looking forward to our getting down to business. So welcome, Mr. President, we are at your disposal.

The President: Thank you for your welcome. It is true that this particular meeting was my idea. In doing so, I had the feeling you would be most agreeable to this kind of meeting. I think I told you that when I drafted my letter on the way back from Paris, I was changing 180 degrees on the need and benefit of such a meeting. That change of heart has been well received in my country for the most part. Since the genesis of this idea, there have been so many dramatic changes in the world. I want to be sure how you view them, including in Eastern Europe, and for you to understand the way I see things. Before the end of these two days, I hope you and I can get together, perhaps with one notetaker.

Chairman Gorbachev: It is very necessary, because they will get tired of us and we will get tired of them.

The President: You said it, pal. But such a talk between us would be very useful.

Chairman Gorbachev: I have the feeling that this is a continuation of our two previous talks.

The President: I feel those were comfortable. There were no kicks under the table. With your permission, I would like to put some ideas on the table, but it is your choice. The first page is boilerplate, so I may skip it. Where it says this is a chance to have a serious discussion, I know you agree. I do want to say that the world will be a better place if perestroika succeeds. I know you had some doubt in New York. You made a statement in New York, which I still remember. You said some U.S. elements want to see perestroika fail. I can't say there are no such elements in the U.S.—but there are no serious elements, and most Americans don't feel that way. As we sit and try to analyze change in Eastern Europe and admire perestroika, there are bound to be differences in the analytical community. But you are dealing with an Administration and, for the most part, a Congress that want to see you succeed.

What I propose to do now is to spell out positive initiatives, not in the sense of negotiating teams, but to set down a framework of areas in which we want to move forward with you. I would like to set the time of a 1990 Summit for several days in the last two weeks of June and set the day for the Ministerials. Jim's thought is the end of January, but of course we will be flexible. Let me paint with a broad brush on the Congressional front. I want to waive Jackson-Vanik, which prohibits MFN. Two things have to happen. You are changing your emigration law and expect it to be completed early next year. Our law requires a trade agreement before MFN status can be granted. Let's begin trade negotiations immediately. I will push the American side to move. I want it done. If that word is not out to the top people in our Administration—and I think it is—I will see to it. I would like to wrap up an agreement by the 1990 Summit. I want to remove statutory restrictions on our ability to provide export credit guarantees.

Let me interrupt my note-reading to say I was impressed with what your Foreign Minister said. Some reporter, probably from the U.S., asked whether the

Soviet Union wanted the U.S. to bail out the USSR. He gave a good answer, reflecting the pride of the Soviet people. If it is agreeable, these steps will not be presented as the superiority of one system or against what Mr. Shevardnadze was conveying with his very good answer. But we are at a sensitive time. I am not making these suggestions as a bailing out. That is not the spirit I came here with.

After Jackson-Vanik, we will explore with Congress the lifting of limitations on export credits and guarantees. I believe we can get that done: not a program of assistance, but a program of cooperation. We would like to hand over a paper with technical cooperation projects that we can pursue together. These cover a wide range of projects and topics, including finance, agriculture, statistics, small business development, anti-monopoly efforts, budgetary and tax policy, and even the role of a stock exchange. These are just suggestions. You may think some are good, and some are bad.

You have expressed an interest in observer status for the Soviet Union at GATT. Let me clear the air on this one. As Mr. Dobrynin knows, we have had a difference on that issue. The U.S. has objected to Soviet observer status at GATT. I've changed. I believe GATT should accept the USSR as an observer, so that we can learn together. We would support that once the Uruguay round is over. We are now to-ing and fro-ing among our friends. We are fighting with the EC on agriculture. They are arguing. To complete the Uruguay Round, we have to drive to a conclusion of existing items. As soon as it is over, Soviet observer status would be good. It may even be an incentive to those at the Uruguay Round. During the intervening year, the Soviet Union could move toward market prices at the wholesale level, so that the Eastern and Western economies become somewhat more compatible. I cannot speak for all at GATT, but we will advocate this step. The Uruguay Round will end less than a year from now. There is another area in which to cooperate on [the] economic front: new cooperation between the Soviet Union and the OECD and improving East-West economic cooperation in the CSCE process. I am trying to convey that we want your views, but the main point is to lean forward on this. Regarding investment and other areas, I want to talk with you. I would like to switch to another area, one that has been contentious: human rights and the resolution of all divided families issues. We have lists which you have been given.

Chairman Gorbachev: The U.S. Embassy is [sic] not been able to cope with the flood of those who want to emigrate. We will keep after you on this. (James Baker passes over the list. It is not a big list. [sic])

The President: Let me bring up the most contentious issue. You know what it is. I know what is. I am not arguing with Mr. Shevardnadze's words, but this issue of having two countries identified with the USSR swimming against the tide in Central America is a great dividing wedge between us. Somehow I would like to discuss this in this big meeting, or between you and me. In a broad context, when I was down there in Costa Rica, Carlos Andres Perez sat next to me at dinner. He gave me a lecture that I am so interested in changes in Eastern Europe, that I am neglecting the Western Hemisphere. He displayed some angst about

Poland: how come them and not us? I said this publicly, and want to repeat: [Costa Rican president] Oscar Arias asked me to please ask President Gorbachev to get Fidel Castro to stop exporting revolution into these fragile democracies.

I know it is difficult, but I want to have a frank discussion about Nicaragua and Cuba. This is the single most disruptive factor to a relationship that is going in the right direction. It is not just the right wing in [the] U.S. Concerns run deeper than that. I know it is sensitive for you, but in the U.S. some ask, "How can they put all this money into Cuba and still want credits?" I want the record to show I have raised this in the most direct possible way. It is a gigantic thorn in one shoe for our relationship. We try to move ahead. Nicaragua promised Mr. Shevardnadze not to ship arms. They owe you an explanation. Ortega owes you an explanation. We think Christiani is trying to control his death squads on the right. He is a good man. He is trying to promote democracy. In Costa Rica, Christiani was with Ortega, who looked at the stars. Please believe me: this is not a right-wing Republican problem. The Sandinistas have not told the truth. The answer is honest elections in Nicaragua and a transfer of power. My concern is that elections will not be open. Yesterday the Sandinistas denied visas to an observer group from our Congress, one-half their supporters.

One last word: given your statesmanship in the world, I would hope you will join us in calling for the Sandinistas to renew the ceasefire, conduct free and fair elections, and accept the results. This would have a very positive effect in Central America and in the U.S. Regarding Cuba, we know Castro is very complicated, but he is a major source of problems in the region. Again, I quote Oscar Arias, with whom we have had big differences. He raised this with me. We see no signs of new thinking in Cuba. Soviet supplies of advanced weaponry—including most recently MIG-29s—which Jim raised with Shevardnadze, exacerbates tension. There is no military threat to Cuba that justifies sending these weapons to Castro. The poor guy is practically broke. The best thing would be if you gave him a signal that it would no longer be business as usual. And I am going to finish, not filibuster.

Chairman Gorbachev: No problem. You are doing it in a businesslike, direct, American way.

The President: Arms control: I want to get rid of chemical weapons. I mean it. Let me offer a new suggestion, granting a concession on my part. If you will agree to the CW initiative I put forward at the UN in September, I am prepared to terminate the U.S. binary modernization program as soon as a global ban is in force. I hope we can get agreement to substantially reduce our stockpiles. CFE: I want to complete a CFE Treaty. High level political attention from your side and our side will be needed to get it done. I worry about getting bogged down in the bureaucracies. I would like to have a goal of a CFE Summit in Vienna to sign a CFE Treaty in 1990. On START, I want to put some steam behind the process. You and I should agree to get all our differences out of the way by the 1990 Summit and hopefully conclude a treaty by then. To that end, we need to concentrate on three issues—ALCM's, non-deployed missiles, and telemetry encryption—to

be resolved at the January Ministerial meeting. I am expediting the START process. We will table most major issues by the January meeting, and will table *all* positions by the time of the next Ministerial following the Open Skies conference. I am instructing my negotiator in Geneva to lift the U.S.-proposed ban on mobiles and make acceptance of mobile ICBMs part of the negotiating text. I would also like you to consider an idea that would improve strategic stability. The SS-18 is the only “heavy” missile in either arsenal. I hope you will consider ending modernization of the SS-18 and deeper unilateral reductions in the SS-18 force. On nuclear testing, I propose that we complete the TTBT and PNET protocols for signature at our summit next year. In addition, I propose that you announce a unilateral decision to adhere to the limits of the Missile Technology Control Regime, to which the U.S. and six other industrial powers adhere. [The Soviets didn’t seem to know what we are talking about.] On your military budget, could you consider making public the details of your budget, force posture, and weapons production figures, the way the U.S. does? As a former CIA man, I hope you got these from the KGB before our meeting

Chairman Gorbachev: They say you are not publishing everything.

The President: I hope you can do this as a trust-building measure. Let me raise some general points for the future. I suggest that we support Berlin as the Olympic site in 2004. This would be a fitting symbol of the new era in East-West relations. On the environment, I know you are getting hit hard. I am getting hit hard. Global climate change is a key issue. Some in the West want to shut down the whole world because of global climate change. We have resisted shutting down the economies of certain countries. We chair two of the three bodies dealing with the issue. There are two steps I intend to take. First, I will offer to host a conference next fall to negotiate a framework treaty on global climate change, after the working groups on the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change complete their final report. There is a lot of science that needs to be factored into this. We have Dr. Allan Bromley, an internationally known scientist, in the White House. I will ask him to convene a White House meeting next spring for top level scientific, environmental, and economic officials to discuss global climate change issues. I hope you will send your top officials in the field. This is my very last point. So much depends on young people, that I would like to propose that we ask our relevant officials to develop a program of university exchanges for Soviet and American undergraduates. Let’s aim to have 1000 young—say, under the age of 25—Soviet people and 1000 Americans studying in each other’s country by the start of the 1991 school year. We are not locked in by numbers; perhaps we can increase these. Perhaps a formula like this would be possible. We have good land grant colleges. This is the end of my non-agenda.

Chairman Gorbachev: This has been interesting. It shows that the Bush Administration has already decided what to do. I will address your specifics, but first let me make some more general remarks. [President hands over letter from President Reagan to Chairman Gorbachev.] Let me begin with some philosophical remarks [using notes in small orange notebook 3x2 inches]. I believe it is

important for both of us to evaluate the period of the Cold War. You cannot rewrite history. What happened, happened. That is the privilege of history. But it is our privilege, even duty, to examine what happened. Why is this? Today, all of us feel we are at an historic watershed. We have to address completely new problems, ones we did not anticipate or expect to become so acute. Now the question is whether we should approach these problems as in the past. In that case, we are bound to fail. If we look back, not everything in the past was totally negative. We have avoided a big war for 45 years.

The President: Right.

Chairman Gorbachev: But still we see today that reliance on force, on military superiority, was wrong. It did not justify itself. You and I have to feel this legacy most. The emphasis on confrontation based on our different ideologies is wrong. We had reached a dangerous point, and it is good that we stopped to reach an understanding. Reliance on nonequal exchange between the developed countries and the developing world cannot go on. It has collapsed. Look at how many problems there are in the developing world that affect all of us. Overall, my conclusion is that strategically and philosophically, the methods of the Cold War were defeated. We are aware of that defeat, and the man in the street is more aware than anyone. I am not preaching, but people are having an impact on policy in the U.S. and the Congress, and in the USSR and the Supreme Soviet. But we face problems of survival, including the environment and problems of resources. People are very much aware of all that. I also believe that the USSR and the U.S.—this started in the Reagan Administration, and you were involved—have become aware that these changes need to be made. People of the U.S. and the USSR desire to move toward each other. At the political level we are lagging behind our people, who want to become closer. This is understandable, because political will and policies are complicated. Marshal Akhromeyev and General Scowcroft understand the military situation, but there are some people on each side, including scientists, who are trying to scare us. It is not easy to change their thinking, but the process is underway. I wanted to begin my remarks by saying this, because in the American political community, there is still one idea very present. It is this. The Soviet Union has begun to change its course. Eastern Europe is cracking, falling apart. The policies of the Cold War were right; those policies should not change. The only thing the U.S. needs to do is to keep its baskets ready to gather the fruit. But, recently, I know you do not agree with this. I know you heard experts give their views, but what you have said today shows President Bush has his own understanding, which is consistent with the challenges of our times. When we speak of the U.S. and the USSR something very serious is involved. We cannot permit our nations to base their policies on illusions and mistakes regarding each other. I note the President has spoken in favor of perestroika but has said appropriately that perestroika is for the Soviet Union to accomplish. We would like to hear from you something more, to hear specific steps to confirm that. Now I have heard plans for such steps. That is very important. I want to say that clearly.

Let me make my second point. There is a major regrouping in the world now. We are moving from a bipolar to a multipolar world. We both will have to deal with an increasingly integrated Europe. Japan is another major factor. I remember we once referred to China, which is another reality that neither of us should try to exploit against one another. China would not accept such an attempt. India is becoming increasingly dynamic. I welcome the carefully balanced position of President Gandhi. I appreciate that Gandhi wants to have good relations with both the U.S. and the USSR. What is our role in this regrouping? Mr. Dobrynin and all the others remember when we discussed this with Secretary Shultz, near the end of the Reagan Administration. He showed me interesting graphs, which were very important, very interesting. This regrouping can be accompanied by disquieting trends. For one example, Eastern Europe's share in the world economy is not much, but look how the world is watching what is happening there. There are tensions. I can imagine that new and enormous issues will come into play, all related to limited resources. We in the Soviet leadership have been thinking about this for some time. The U.S. and the USSR are doomed to cooperate for a long time, but we have to abandon the vestiges of images of an enemy. Such approaches still exist. When we think of new challenges, we have to think about how big the U.S. and Soviet militaries are. I am not suggesting a U.S.-Soviet condominium, only describing reality. I do not call into question our allied responsibility or previous patterns of cooperation. But there must be patterns of cooperation to take account of new realities, and we are just beginning to understand those realities. There is some discussion in the U.S. about what kind of Soviet Union the U. S. would like to see: dynamic success or painful disasters. I know the kind of advice you have been receiving. It is our view that we want the U.S. to be a confident country which tackles its problems confidently: economic, technical, and social. If you want, you can check with all my interlocutors; they will confirm this in my position with world leaders. Any other approach is dangerous. It is dangerous to ignore or neglect the interests of the U.S. However, that means the U.S., too, must take into account the interests of others. The U.S. has not entirely abandoned old approaches. I cannot say we have entirely abandoned ours. Some times we feel the U.S. wants to teach, to put pressure on others. We are aware of that. I will want to hear your response, because this is how we will build bridges across rivers rather than parallel to them. This is very important. Since you, Mr. President, have several years in office, I feel it is important to be very clear on this. Maybe this one meeting will not be enough but we must understand this fundamental point [slaps table with emphasis]. The rest is details which will fit in. As for what is happening in USSR and Eastern Europe, we will have time to discuss that. But we can continue our earlier discussion.

The President: I hope you have noticed that as dynamic change has accelerated in recent months, we have not responded with flamboyance or arrogance that would complicate USSR relations. What I am saying may be self-serving. I have been called cautious or timid. I am cautious, but not timid. But I have conducted

myself in ways not to complicate your life. That's why I have not jumped up and down on the Berlin Wall.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes, we have seen that, and appreciate that. We have some concern on one thing: your actions in the Philippines. I appreciate your letter and want to discuss this.

The President: Good.

Chairman Gorbachev: I welcome very much what you have outlined, because behind these steps I see political will at the top of the U.S. government. Why is this important to me? On the basis of my cooperation with President Reagan, I remember there were times when we encountered an impasse. In Geneva, President Reagan and I may drink coffee and other things, but make no progress. When I was with Chernyaev at the Black Sea, I got a letter from President Reagan and talked with Shevardnadze. There was not much to work with in the letter. (All this was after our summit in Geneva.) I could have responded in kind but thought instead: what if we suggest meeting in a couple of weeks at Reykjavik? Maybe Reykjavik scared some in the U.S., Europe, and the USSR, but it was an intellectual breakthrough, and our relations began to move. We have accumulated a lot of possibilities in the economic area, but first it takes political will on your part to influence U.S. business. Your business people are disciplined. They were waiting for the signal of a new U.S. policy. Now they have it.

As for START, our negotiators need new instructions from our level. But your remarks are very important from that standpoint. I thank you for placing bilateral cooperation at the top of the agenda. Regarding economic cooperation, we are ready to work actively to discuss those things with you without seeking to surprise anyone. The situation is this. On our side and your side, people say we have to cooperate—when we get together people say “Malta/Yalta” [animated]. We need to discuss and explain things to our allies, but I think it can be done. I welcome your proposal for Ministers to meet as early as January. Regarding economic issues, your intentions are very encouraging. Our policy is to move more and more to adjust to the world economy. Laws on property, land ownership, and lease-holding are going ahead. We will overhaul our entire structure of prices in the USSR. In the final analysis, it is necessary to move to the convertibility of the ruble.

The President: Yup.

Chairman Gorbachev: As we restructure our economy, I feel that it is better if we get involved in the international financial institutions. We must learn to take the world economy into perestroika. I know some in the U.S. worry that we would politicize the international financial institutions. We were ideological. So were you. But it's a different time, and we will work on new criteria. But I appreciate your willingness to help the Soviet Union to become involved in the world economy. The Supreme Soviet has been working hard and has adopted 34 laws. The law on emigration is only on the first reading. Laws on freedom of conscience and the press are on first reading, too. These are far-reaching laws that will create a legal base for far-reaching change. There is no way back.

On Central America, when Shevardnadze told me about Jim Baker's letter criticizing us about Soviet policy toward Central America, I said it was a misunderstanding. If we promise something to you, we always want to keep our pledges or you will not have trust in our relationship. We want to convince you we are not engaged in political games. We pledged we would not supply weapons to Nicaragua and we are not. I appreciate Congress's cutting off weapons to the Contras. As soon as the Cessna crashed, Shevardnadze and Yazov asked their Nicaraguan and Cuban counterparts, and both countries strongly said they had nothing to do with that incident. So that's the way it is. Ortega and even Castro said they are ready to explain themselves to America. After my trip to Cuba, I sent you a letter. I will be a little more specific when we have a one-on-one talk and tell you more about my talk with Castro. There are lots of weapons in Central America. A Cessna plane was used to land in Red Square, and there are experts involved in El Salvador operations. But we will keep our word. If your position doesn't change, ours won't. We see how you perceive this problem but don't really understand [laugh, good-naturedly]. There is political pluralism in Nicaragua. It has nothing to do with Marxism. It is ridiculous to speak of the Sandanistas [sic] as Marxists. The roots of the current situation are economical and historical. I don't see why Nicaragua is so unacceptable to you. They will have a new government after elections. Let the UN and the Latin Americans monitor the election. Frankly, we are not that much concerned with them. Let that process unfold. As for Cuba, Castro emerged without any assistance from us. Your country and ours have been in different situations re Cuba. Mr. President, I think we can change this, too. No one can really give orders to Cuba, absolutely no one. Castro, for instance, has his own views of perestroika, saying what he thinks [laughs again]. But we need mutual understanding. We don't want bridgeheads in Cuba or Central America. We don't need that. You must be convinced of that.

Regarding arms control: on CW I anticipated your new position but did not know you would propose ending binary production. That is very important, so we will think that over. It certainly shows movement, although there is some disjuncture from an early global ban, which should be our goal, but we would be moving to that goal through steps. Right?

Secretary Baker: That's correct. Our position used to be to support an effectively verifiable worldwide global ban. We were having difficulty over verification. The President now says that if the Soviet Union will support the President's UN proposal (20%-2%), that action would be taken without further progress on verification. The President would forego CW modernization. The U.S. and the USSR could agree, even coming out of this meeting, to do this.

Chairman Gorbachev: The goal of a global ban remains?

Secretary Baker: Absolutely.

Chairman Gorbachev: Let's get our experts together.

Chairman Gorbachev: Without details on CFE, let me respond to your proposal. This is 100% the same proposal we have been pushing. It is very important. As for START, we need political will. I listened carefully to what you have

said. I heard nothing from you on SLCMs. I understand that you were in the Navy.

The President: They didn't have SLCMs when I was in. I'm too old.

President Gorbachev: By June, it is realistic to expect that a START Treaty could be completed. But if we cannot solve SLCM by then, that could cause significant problems. You have a significant advantage. Marshal Akhromeyev and General Scowcroft have discussed some suggestions on this.

The President: Maybe they can talk further.

President Gorbachev: It's a problem and both sides consider it a problem. We don't think on all issues we have to be neck and neck. There are differences in the structures of our forces. But nuclear SLCM are a serious factor if we reduce everything else while those remain without some SLCM constraints. And the Supreme Soviet would not ratify.

Secretary Baker: Come on. That's our argument.

President Gorbachev: As for nuclear testing and publicizing our military budget, we take note of your proposals. I welcome your suggestions for further cooperation. We will participate in that White House meeting. In summing up, we could particularly note these.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 04-1944-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 82: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Gorbachev,
First Restricted Bilateral Meeting, Malta, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

December 2, 1989

These somewhat attenuated American notes of the first so-called “one-on-one” meeting between Bush and Gorbachev at Malta (actually a three-on-three with two interpreters plus Anatoly Chernyaev and Brent Scowcroft as notetakers) constitute a telegraphic rendering of the conversation. The Soviet version of the conversation (published in Masterpieces of History) is significantly more detailed, but the American version is not contradictory, and has real value for highlighting what Scowcroft saw as most important. Thus this memo puts in quotes Gorbachev’s up-front expression of Fidel Castro’s interest in normalizing relations with the U.S. Bush responds by calling Castro “a sea anchor as you move forward” and accusing the Nicaraguans of “exporting revolution” and weapons—to which Gorbachev rebuts, “There were U.S. rockets too.” In the Soviet memcon at this point, Bush admits, “That is possible;” but there is no such admission in Scowcroft’s version. After discussion of Panama and the Philippines, Gorbachev warns, “In the Soviet Union some are saying the Brezhnev Doctrine is being replaced by the Bush doctrine” of U.S. intervention. When Bush protests that Aquino in the Philippines was democratically elected, Gorbachev says so were the now-fallen governments of Eastern Europe. On the subject of Europe, Gorbachev complains about Helmut Kohl, who had just days before on November 28 pronounced his “10 Points” towards confederation without consulting with Washington, Moscow, or even his own foreign minister. “Mr. Kohl is in too much of a hurry on the German question,” Gorbachev tells Bush, who lets the Soviet leader know that Kohl’s allies (meaning Thatcher and Mitterrand) “have some private reservations about reunification.” Gorbachev agrees: “Yes I know—and they have let me know.” Bush assures Gorbachev that “we will do nothing to recklessly try to speed up reunification.”

Chairman Gorbachev: I have three points. I already referred to Central America especially Cuba. I recall a letter to you after Cuba. My talks in Cuba weren’t simple. Castro expressed caution about our policy—I explained our aims were good. I said as for our internal affairs we are doing what we want. What you do is your business. He asked me, in effect, to help normalize U.S.-Cuban relations.

The President: I understand. It will stay with me.

Chairman Gorbachev: I think perhaps we would think how to do it. Some contacts. We could participate but that is not necessary. I can say that Castro understands that the world is changing dramatically but he has his own sense of dignity and pride. Even raising this possibility was not easy for him.

The President: What is he saying?

Chairman Gorbachev: His very words, “Find a way to make the President aware of my interest in normalization.” It is on the basis of that remark that I made my comments.

The President: Let's put all our cards on the table about Castro. Our allies can't see why we care about Central America. It just isn't a gut issue for them. For the political left in the U.S., it isn't a gut issue. But for the fledgling democracies in Latin America and the U.S. right it is a gut issue. Castro is like a sea anchor as you move forward and the Western Hemisphere moves. He is against all this—Eastern Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

Publicly Latin Americans will not criticize a colleague. But [Costa Rican President Oscar] Arias' call was a clear indication that Castro is now totally isolated. There is another major Castro problem—the emigres (in Florida) who have strong emotions about this last dictator. We have had feelers from Castro but never with an indication of a willingness to change.

Switching to Nicaragua, you said Ortega had nothing to do with [illegible]⁴⁴. I am inclined to agree though I didn't use to think so. But I am convinced that they are exporting revolution. They are sending weapons. I don't care what they have told you, they are supporting the FMLN. I am now convinced there is a new shipment of helos going from the Soviet Union to Nicaragua. I don't question Shevardnadze's word on this.

Chairman Gorbachev: There were U.S. rockets too.

The President: I see a solution as in a verifiable election free and open and that if Ortega loses he doesn't try to cling to power. If it is a free election, we will abide by the results.

The only other open cancer is Panama, but there is no feeling that the Soviet Union wants Noriega to succeed. He is a terrible problem for us. I asked the Attorney General if our indictments were strong ones. I am seeking for him to get out. This is quite confidential. He said these are good indictments and given feelings on drugs in the U.S., I can't drop the indictments.

Chairman Gorbachev: Let me tell you how your steps are perceived in the Soviet Union. People ask are there no barrier to the U.S. action in independent countries? The U.S. passes judgement [sic] and executes that judgement [sic].

The President: There is no military operation against Colombia, but if we are asked for help against the scourge of drugs, we will help.

Then I would like to mention the Philippines.

I was surprised at your Philippines reaction. Aquino is democratically elected and asked for our help to prevent the palace from being bombed by the rebels. It never occurred to me that this would cause problems in the Soviet Union, though I probably would have done it anyway. But that notion never occurred to me.

Chairman Gorbachev: In the Soviet Union some are saying the Brezhnev doctrine is being replaced by the Bush doctrine.

⁴⁴ Chernyaev's notes indicate the key missing word is probably "Marxism." His version reads: "Now, about Nicaragua. You said that the Sandinistas are not real Marxists. Earlier I had a different opinion, but today I would tend to agree ..." (Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 631). [Editors]

The President: I want to understand. Here is a democracy saying that it needs help against rebels.

Chairman Gorbachev: I agree she is democratically elected. It depends on the context. In Eastern Europe there are governments, legitimately elected, that are now being replaced. The question is in Eastern Europe it is prohibited for Soviet troops to intervene. All now is interrelated. Some now are seeing that we are not performing our duty to our friends. But we have not been asked.

The President: In Eastern Europe, change is peaceful and encouraged by you. In the Philippines, there is a Colonel trying to shoot his way into power.

Chairman Gorbachev: I agree—peaceful change is the way. Our position is non-interference. The process of change can be painful but we believe in non-interference. Colonels can be found everywhere to do those jobs.

The President: If we can stick with the notion of peaceful change, better relations will occur between the Soviet Union and the U.S. I would never give advice to a senior office holder like you. I can accept your criticism, but not on this issue, in this circumstance. Aquino is struggling to bring democracy. I would hope your criticism could be muted. I can accept it but I think that your criticism would cut the wrong way.

I appreciate your explanation in the Philippines. One more comment on Latin America. I don't want to sound like a broken record. Let me express U.S. public opinion on you yourself. There is strong support for perestroika and for establishing pluralistic answers in Eastern Europe—strong support. But I think people see support for Castro—almost—speaking frankly—as an embarrassment. He is against the causes you are advocating.

Chairman Gorbachev: That is pluralism (laughs).

The President: I wish we could find a way. You are spending billions into the pipeline and getting nothing for it, and it does interfere with our overall relationship. The way you have handled it is clear. Castro doesn't just do what you say.

Just to end it—anything we can do to cut support for Cuba and Nicaragua so we are not on opposite sides. Chile is moving in the right direction—not toward the U.S. but toward democracy and I don't want these others to get in the way of what I want to do with the Soviet Union.

Chairman Gorbachev: The most important thing is that we have no plan for Latin America—no bridges, no bridgeheads. That is not our policy—you have it from me. [next line illegible]⁴⁵

I am moving toward democracy. Of course they are fledgling and the road ahead will be difficult. We are satisfied with that—as you—but we will not interfere.

⁴⁵ Chernyaev's version reads: "The Soviet Union has no plans with regard to spheres of influence in Latin America. This was and will continue to be the case. This continent is now in motion. You know it better than I do. I agree with you: the general trend is positive, democratic; dictatorships give way to democratic forms, although these are young, newly formed democracies ..." (Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 633). [Editors]

With Cuba, yes, we have a long relationship—responding to the economic blockade. We seek to put it on a more normal basis, especially economic. We are trading with Cuba and that meets our need—sugar, citrus, nickel—but it is much more to Cuba’s advantage. For example, we sell oil to Cuba on a market clearing basis which we could sell for much more. But Cuba is independent with its own view and we don’t want to interfere.

I mention Castro’s signal because I think it shows Castro sees his interest lies in changing his relations with the U.S. and others. So please give it some thought. If you have something to share with us or something we can pass on. We can note we have had a frank conversation and understand each other better.

The President: We have had feelers from him. But if he could do something in human rights. I will think carefully on it. I will let you know so we don’t get disconnected on this.

Chairman Gorbachev: We could say that to him about human rights.

The President: He won’t even let the U.N. in to see.

Chairman Gorbachev: I haven’t finished (laughs).

The President: Neither have I.

Chairman Gorbachev: O.K.

The President: O.K.

Chairman Gorbachev: Let me address Eastern Europe. I have three points.

- (1) The direction of change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is such as to bring us closer—that is important.
- (2) What I dislike is when some U.S. politicians say unity of Europe should be on the basis of Western values. We have long been accused of exporting ideology. That is what is now being proposed by some—not you.
- (3) Mr. Kohl is in too much of a hurry on the German question. That is not good. I worry that this could be part of his pre-election game and not because of a strategic outlook. There are some differences in view in West Germany, within the coalition, and with the SPD. We should let Kohl know that his approach could damage things.

For example, would a united Germany be outside alliances or within NATO? Answer is premature and we shouldn’t put it forth—should let it run its natural course. You and I are not responsible for the division of Germany. Let history decide what should happen. We need an understanding on this.

The President: I think Kohl feels an enormous emotional response to what has happened—as does Genscher. There is some politics in his three part program and some emotional outpouring. I think he knows his allies—after they support right of the German people to reunify, have some private reservations about reunification.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes I know—and they have let me know. Unlike they and you—I am saying there are two states, mandated by history. So let history decide the outcome. Kohl assures me he will abide by understandings made in

Bonn. Now he says he wants to talk on the phone and Genscher is coming. I think this is an ? [sic] particular prudence.

The President: I agree and we will do nothing to recklessly try to speed up reunification. When you talk to Kohl, I think you will see he agrees. But his rhetoric, you must understand, is emotional and possibly some politics, but mostly emotion.

Chairman Gorbachev: It is good that things have [illegible]⁴⁶

The President: The most conservative Americans salute how you have handled this issue. They are now looking back into history. I will be timid—that is how in a nutshell they describe my refusal to jump up and down at the Wall. This is no time for grandstanding—a step that looks good but could prove reckless.

Chairman Gorbachev: The times we live in are of great responsibility—great opportunity but great responsibility.

The President: I would like to spend some time on one other point at some time.

Chairman Gorbachev: I have one other point as well—later. A point which you carefully avoided.

The President: Yes, I was hoping to avoid it.

Chairman Gorbachev: I once said something—You used a word that means “a test” to see if we could solve mutual problems.

The President: Afghanistan is more important to you than to us. I was wrong about what would happen after Soviet troops left. Let’s discuss it.

The President: Let me not blind side you. You may not want to discuss it. But I would like to know your views concerning the sensitive area of the Baltics.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes, we will.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 04-1944-MR by the National Security Archive.*]

⁴⁶ Chernyaev quotes Gorbachev as follows: “I would like to stress that we view positively the change that created these possibilities for normal contacts, broader cooperation and trade between the two German states,” (Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, p. 635). [Editors]

Document No. 83: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Gorbachev,
Luncheon Meeting, Malta, 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

December 2, 1989

This American memorandum of conversation prepared from notes by Robert Blackwill provides a level of detail largely parallel to the Soviet version of the same meeting. There is mention of the 1988 Governors Island talks between Reagan, Gorbachev and Bush, and the Soviet leader's "warm memories" of those meetings. The lunch features a lengthy and fascinating discussion by Gorbachev of economic issues and his proposed reforms, with some commiseration by Bush: "What gets you on budgeting is these unforeseen circumstances. Our savings and loan problems are costing \$50 billion." To which Gorbachev replies: "That is not much considering the size of your economy," and then gives Jim Baker quite a nudge: "Did this happen when you were Secretary of the Treasury?" Gorbachev sees the deep problems in the Soviet economy, the "deformation of the market, the great ruble overhang" of peoples' savings in their mattresses, reducing liquidity. But he is caught, he says, if they move to a free market: "within a week the workers would be in the streets bringing the downfall of any government." Change will take time—"we are not agreeing" to sell land to the people, instead, "we will lease, with the right of inheritance" and the "main thing is to have many options, not to foreclose options." Bush responds at the end that the only way to reform is to privatize: "Then, the worker has a real reason to work."

The President: Your meeting with the Pope went well. It got very good press in the U.S.

Chairman Gorbachev: It went over the limit prescribed. It was a very substantial meeting.

The President: Did you and Minister Shevardnadze talk about the Middle East while we were having our one-on-one?

Secretary Baker: We spent the whole time on our CW proposal. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze suggested a directive to the ministers from the two leaders.

The President: The Lebanon situation is of heartbreaking concern to us. We have lots of interest in a peaceful resolution but very little influence.

Chairman Gorbachev: We are doing much to improve the situation there.

Minister Shevardnadze: We received a request from the President (of Lebanon) to issue a statement of support. He made a similar request to you.

The President: We have already done that.

Chairman Gorbachev: We made a statement to this effect with President Mitterrand and on our own. The President of Lebanon feels that our meeting could helpfully issue statement of support. I would like to see this. Perhaps we could make an oral statement for the press reaffirming our previous statements.

The President: I like the idea.

Minister Shevardnadze: The Lebanese President writes that he intends to use force against Aoun.

The President: That would mean Syrian force. He doesn't have many foot soldiers. The outpouring of friendship for you in Italy was wonderful. It came through on our television.

Chairman Gorbachev: I have warm memories of the meetings I had in New York City and the warm feelings toward me.

The President: Very good.

Chairman Gorbachev: When our cars were on the way to Governors Island, we learned of the earthquake in Armenia. I talked to Ryzhkov on the way. That night we were told 35,000 to 100,000 died. We were shocked and immediately took the decision to fly home.

Secretary Baker: What was the final count?

Chairman Gorbachev: 24,000. I haven't seen anything like it in my life.

The President: How is it now? Are you getting housing for the people?

Chairman Gorbachev: We have a program worked out, but we had to be sure that the new houses were protected against earthquakes. That doubled the cost. There have been some delays, but work is progressing well. Chernobyl cost 8–10 billion rubles, including compensation to people affected. Restoring Armenia cost 12 to 14 billion rubles. There has also been a drop in oil prices. All of the above means for the next five year period we have some difficult choices.

The President: What gets you on budgeting is these unforeseen [sic] circumstances. Our savings and loan problems are costing \$50 billion.

Chairman Gorbachev: That is not much considering the size of your economy. Did this happen when you (Secretary Baker) were Secretary of Treasury? In Italy, I saw a lot of products and few customers. In our country, it is the opposite. Your shops have merchandise. Ours have none. The main problem is the deformation of the market, the great ruble overhang. We have been given a lot of advice. First, let the market decide, and let it absorb excessive liquidity—a free market. I asked our economists where in the world there is a completely free market in the last ten years. They could give me no example. If we followed that advice, within a week the workers would be in the streets bringing the downfall of any government. Others advise that we buy 16 to 20 billion rubles of consumer goods. To these advocates I say: (1) we can't allow vital questions for our country to be decided elsewhere; (2) if we agreed to such a course, it would be a major blunder and it would make our restructuring more difficult. We need to wean our people away from a leveling principle. They need to learn how to work, to depend on themselves. Our society is changing and we must change our thinking.

The President: In that regard Alan Greenspan's visit, for example, was very helpful. The visits of some U.S. business people are very helpful. I have respect for our systems being widely apart now as you work for change inside the Soviet economy. In the U.S. there is interest in enhancing trade, and hopefully it is in your interest if we have more exchanges and visits between our economic and

business people talking exclusively about trade and economics. It would help for us to work together to advise our business people concerning their activities in the USSR. I don't have a formal proposal but these activities would serve what I want—more trade and investment between our two countries.

Chairman Gorbachev: That is exactly what we favor. As a general remark, we expect from the U.S. President is a political statement in support of what we are doing. Business circles in the U.S. have great potential and, as Ambassador Dobrynin can testify, are eager to move forward. That is why I attach great significance to what you said today about the economic measures you have in mind.

The President: We have to move toward more compatibility of the systems, instead of the current polar situation. This can be done without putting down the other guy. Regarding statistics, we do not have perfect accuracy, but we have some pretty good people. I would like them to sit down with your folks. This is good for the investment climate. Jim Baker is reminding me of the list of ten areas in this domain where we can cooperate.

Chairman Gorbachev: In some of those areas, we have ongoing cooperation. But we can do better on banking activities and fiscal issues. For example, the people of Milan have started a business school in Moscow.

Secretary Baker: Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and I discussed this before in Wyoming. As a former finance minister, may I say this: this morning you mentioned ultimate convertibility of the ruble. We totally agree that is the direction you should try to go. To get to convertibility will probably require you to establish a price system. I am quite aware that economists will say to do that now and politicians will say that it's not possible.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes.

Secretary Baker: Before you do that you must take care of the ruble overhang. I wonder what steps you have decided on to take care of the ruble overhang and wanted to urge you not to forget the potential use of gold—or gold backed bonds as instruments. You could get rid of some of that overhang without dangerous side effects.

Chairman Gorbachev: On this score, we are already undertaking initial measures. We are doing this within the framework of next year's plan. We want to reduce our budget deficit by 60 billion rubles, by one-half. We want to restrain the rise in profits and earnings. So we must, first, exert strict control of excessive ruble overhang through proper taxation and, second, introduce bonds or securities that would pay a certain percent of interest. We must also use up excessive rubles by making people buy bonds that would guarantee delivery of a car from a new plant we intend to build. We are reducing our volume of industrial investments to funnel them elsewhere. We also are making the military sector produce consumer goods. In one case, we gave a government order to 325 military enterprises to produce food processing equipment. On December 12, the Congress of Peoples Deputies will go to work on our financial situation and promote economic reforms. There is one suggestion of selling land to the people. We are not agreeing to this. Rather, we will lease, with the right of inheritance. We are moving toward

private property, but very small and with no big business. Our eventual goal is to make all these enterprises act within the market after market mechanisms have been installed. In Italy, Soviet businesses operate in just this way.

The President: If more privatization can be encouraged, this would be better for international trade, at least with the U.S. It would attract capital from our country in tremendous volumes.

Chairman Gorbachev: If we have property of stockholders, for example, there are such examples in the U.S. In the U.S. it is difficult to find pure, genuine private property in [the] U.S.—perhaps only on a family farm. What counts is the degree of economic independence. What is important is to be able to dispose of the means of production and products, but this could be through leasing, cooperatives, or stockholding. Naturally, we need widespread banking and credit institution systems. If we take, Mr. President, the example of the U.S., there are many variants. The ways applied in the U.S.—or, say, U.K.—vary. Italy is different still. Sweden has mostly cooperatives. The main thing is to have many options, not to foreclose options. We have to allow certain variants to take shape.

The President: But the Swedes do best when they privatize, as in Saab. Then, the worker has a real reason to work.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 04-1944-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 84: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Second Restricted Bilateral Meeting,
Malta, 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

December 3, 1989

This American memcon, written by Brent Scowcroft, is the most telegraphic of all the summit transcripts, reducing a full hour of Bush-Gorbachev conversation, with only interpreters plus Chernyaev and Scowcroft present, to a single page of notes. The Soviet transcript of Malta, already published in Masterpieces of History, does not separate the sessions in the way the American does, with timestamps, so there is research value in having even Scowcroft's distilled version.

The topic could hardly be more important—the problem of nationalities in the USSR and what to do about the restive Baltics, whose incorporation into the Soviet Union by Stalin the U.S. had never officially recognized. In a foreshadowing of the ultimate breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991, Gorbachev notes that in Ukraine “50 million are non-Ukrainian,” in Kazakhstan “Kazakhs are only 30 percent of the population,” and “destructive forces should not be allowed to undermine” a “democratic process.” Despite omitting most of the substance, Scowcroft does capture a truly characteristic Bush comment at the very end: “I didn’t respond to all arms control but we want to move forward. But we must be prudent. We are looking for ways to make further reductions, especially in manpower in CFE. I must consult with NATO.” And that’s it.

The President: I want to discuss an idea on bibles and a proposal on Billy Graham. (Described the question he is asked about the Baltics.)

Chairman Gorbachev: I have discussed how we see a [illegible]. Many problems have arisen. We were ready to deal with them through greater autonomy. If separatism would become dominant, that would be dramatic. I must not create a danger to perestroika. The Soviet peoples would not understand. We lived together for fifty years, we are integrated. We have sixty million living out there in nationality areas. Fifty percent of Estonia are Russians, over 50% percent of Latvians are now Russian, Lithuanian majority in Lithuania. In the Ukraine, 50 million are non-Ukrainian. Kazakhs are only 30% of the population. Our country is that way and separatism brings out strong feelings by people.

There has been a calming down but still there are problems. Ths [sic] is a sensitive issue for us. I hope you understand our position. This would bring out all sorts of terrible fires. If the U.S. has no understanding it would spoil relations with the U.S. more than anything else.

The President: But if you use force—you don’t want to—that would create a firestorm. You will get that question.

Chairman Gorbachev: We want all to get equal treatment. If we removed our MVD troops from Nagorno-Karabakh we would have war. We are committed to a democratic process and we hope you understand.

What happened here is precisely what we wanted. We are very pleased. There are some in both countries who don't like what we are doing. But we are right. Destructive forces should not be allowed to undermine this. Let me [illegible] some.

The President: What forces?

Chairman Gorbachev: Sometimes lies are presented in the press, etc., i.e. that Gorbachev sold his friends down the river as a student after drinking ... [illegible]

The President: I never heard of this. We have a lot of nuts.

Chairman Gorbachev: I know you don't believe it.

The President: The visit is exactly what I hoped. I didn't respond to all arms control but we want to move forward. But we must be prudent. We are looking for ways to make further reductions, especially in manpower in CFE. I must consult with NATO.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 04-1944-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 85: Memorandum of Conversation:
Bush–Gorbachev, Second Expanded Bilateral Meeting,
Malta, 4:35 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

December 3, 1989

On the original Malta schedule, the American president was supposed to host the second large session of the delegations, and thus this memorandum of conversation (prepared by NSC staffer Condoleezza Rice) begins with jokes by Gorbachev (“I am your guest”) and Bush (“How do you like my ship?”) even though they are meeting on the Gorky again. Most interesting about this American memo are the very real differences in the language of a few key phrases between Rice’s rendering (she spoke Russian herself) and that of Chernyaev on the Soviet side (as published in Masterpieces of History). The Soviet version gives Gorbachev’s language a larger sweep, as in “joint efforts for providing mutual security” versus Rice’s “joint efforts for verifiable limits on nuclear weapons.” Chernyaev quotes Gorbachev as saying the “U.S. continues to be guided by a rapid reaction strategy that was adopted over 20 years ago” in contrast to the new defensive Soviet doctrine, but the U.S. notes call the strategy one of “flexible response” not rapid reaction, which misses Gorbachev’s point.

During this discussion, Bush candidly confesses “we have been surprised by the rapidity of change” in Europe and since “you are closer” to events there, “I am anxious to hear from you.” Gorbachev surprises the Americans by insisting that both the U.S. and the USSR are close to Europe and “equally involved and integrated.” Bush responds, “What I meant was that we haven’t been that close to Eastern Europe but want to become closer without damaging Soviet interests. We are involved, of course. We lead NATO. But you have been more the catalyst for change in a productive way.” Gorbachev then appeals to Bush’s “stability” focus with a proposal for a Helsinki II summit to keep the revolutionary changes in Europe within the “common European house” framework while allowing the Warsaw Pact and NATO to develop “a more political than military nature.” The two sides have a vigorous discussion of “Western values” and how the Soviets do not appreciate the phrase, at the end of which they agree on the formulation “democratic values.” The dialogue concludes with a candid review of problems in the Middle East (with Secretary of State Baker vowing: “you won’t see me on a plane” there), and in Afghanistan, where Communist leader Najibullah had survived the Soviet pullout in 1988, much to the surprise of the Americans. Bush insists “we have no desire to see a hostile regime on your border.”

Chairman Gorbachev: Well, what remains to be covered? I know our Ministers have something to cover and, after all, I am your guest today. (laughs)

The President: How do you like my ship? The press was yelling at me on the Belknap that everything was cut short. I told them that we worked at lunch too.

Chairman Gorbachev: Overall it was five hours. We know better. If you don't mind—because of this we could have a press conference together.

The President: We have arranged to do something together and then a press conference.

Chairman Gorbachev: Have you announced that? Because I think our press conference will have to be here on the Gorkii. I thought it would be better to do it here.

The President: If we do that the press will think I'm dodging their questions. They will say I don't want to answer their questions.

Chairman Gorbachev: O.K. We will come out together—not for a press conference—answer a few questions. Then I will just have a press meeting not a press conference.

The President: Fine. I'll have a final answer for you after the meeting.

Chairman Gorbachev: Mr. President, yesterday I responded to your proposals. Maybe you want to listen to our suggestions. I will take into account what you said. This is an informal meeting—the first—between the two of us. I want to say to you and the United States that the Soviet Union will under no circumstances start a war—that is very important. The Soviet Union is ready no longer to regard the United States as an adversary and is ready to state that our relationship is cooperative. That is the first point.

Second, we favor joint efforts for verifiable limits on nuclear weapons. We are interested in continuing arms control but need to go beyond the arms race and renounce the creation of new weapons. Our military people are already cooperating. I want to thank you for giving General Yazov a chance to familiarize himself with U.S. armed forces.

Third, we have a defensive military doctrine. We have given explanations to the United States of what is meant by it. I want to note that the structure of our armed forces is changing—assuming a defensive nature. They are declining in bridging, landing equipment and changing the location of our air forces. We are removing strike aircraft and putting defensive aircraft where the strike aircraft were located. We are not keeping these activities secret. Our military people are ready to meet with yours and to discuss certain suggestions for adopting and implementing defensive doctrine.

Still, the U.S. is proceeding on the basis of flexible response which was in the past justified but now—now that there are recognized changes at the political-military level—why isn't the United States moving to change the posture of its own armed forces. This is very important. I have read the Brussels Statement (I think it is sixty pages) and there is no real change as yet.

Another fundamental point. We have been discussing the dynamics of negotiations. Let me point to one problem that I think is of great importance. Both of us recognized that both sides have created tremendous military power and are becoming aware of catastrophic consequences. We have shown political will to eliminate that threat. We signed the first treaty together—the INF treaty.

The President: Thanks for what you sent me by Dobrynin—the piece of the SS-20.

Chairman Gorbachev: This is the only realistic perspective. A lot has been done and the prospects from what you did yesterday are good. But something worries us. It is the naval issue which is still outside the process of negotiation. This is an emotional issue for previous Administrations and ours and to a certain extent we understand that the U.S. is a sea power whose lifeline is the sea and ocean. We know that the U.S. has a tradition of building these kinds of armed forces.

It is not an easy issue but just look at the situation. As of the early 1950s the U.S.S.R. was surrounded by naval bases—500,000 men, hundreds of aircraft, huge fleets. The U.S. has aircraft carriers with about 1500 aircraft. All that is deployed in waters adjacent to us. In this context, I am not speaking about submarines.

The Vienna talks will result in lowering the confrontation on land and the prospects are good on strategic arms. We believe that soon we are entitled to expect that the naval threat to us should be reduced.

I will venture an initiative. I believe we should start talks on naval arms. Maybe through confidence building measures or reducing the level of naval activities we could do something. After we are finished at CFE and START we need to go over to naval issues.

I know that the U.S. faces other potential problems than the Soviet Union but in the same way that the U.S. feels Europe is important we need security from any ocean threat.

Now I would like to make some remarks on the current talks. I understand that we do not want to discuss details at this meeting. But I want to make remarks on three items. I would like to continue discussion and have the military people do it. We must come to grips with problems and see them clearly.

First, we must better understand the relationship between the ABM and the START treaty—taking into account the Shevardnadze proposals to Baker.

Second, we believe it is important to get a handle on heavy bombers and AL-CMs. If the current U.S. proposal were adopted, the overall aggregate total would be not 6000 but over 8500. We are not seeking an advantage for ourselves—the actual loads should be equalizing.

Third, SLCMs. I already talked about it. If I understand you correctly, it is to resolve the START issues by the time of the Summit by the end of 1990 and have a treaty signed.

Another important point too—Scowcroft and Akhromeyev have had some very useful talks. The U.S. and Soviet navies have nuclear weapons such as submarines and SLCMs and tactical nuclear weapons—nuclear mines, etc.

Submarines are strategic weapons and are verifiable and will be in the structure of both arsenals. It is a part of the triad of forces.

But the rest—tactical nuclear forces at sea—should be eliminated. This was suggested in informal discussions. I hope neither Scowcroft nor Akhromeyev will be offended by my now putting this on the table more formally.

We would be ready to do away with all nuclear forces at sea—that would be the easiest for verification. Well.

The problem is reducing not only weapons but people:

First, our proposal that overall aggregates should be 1.3 million a reduction of 1 million men by each side. NATO has not agreed. I think that people will find the decision to reduce weapons and not people unacceptable.

Second, there is the issue of reducing the numbers of personnel deployed on foreign territory. We are proposing that the numbers of personnel be reduced to 300,000 men per alliance. This is like a proposal suggested first by the Soviet Union but your proposal does not deal with many foreign troops on the soil of the Western alliance (the UK, France, etc.)

Third, our proposal is for a ceiling of 4700 front-line tactical aircraft. I also suggested that there should be a sub-ceiling on defensive interceptor aircraft.

Nothing has been agreed and I want to request that the next Ministerial look at these concerns.

Fourth, on open skies, we support the proposal and will participate. We intend to work positively and intend to have our military people look at it closely but we should also develop open seas, open space.

[At this point Chairman Gorbachev hands over a map of U.S. bases surrounding the Soviet Union.]

The President: These are U.S.?

Chairman Gorbachev: You see the USSR is clear (laughs) but the Sixth Fleet is moving.

The President: Where is the SLAVA?

Chairman Gorbachev: Not on the map.

The President: Why don't we see how accurate this is and we'll tell you if there are any problems.

Secretary Baker: You should fill in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Chairman Gorbachev: U.S. territory is white on this map too—it isn't filled in.

The President: Should I?

Chairman Gorbachev: Fill it in.

Secretary Baker: When you start publishing your defense budget we can fill the whole thing in.

Chairman Gorbachev: We are moving in that direction. I only want to underline the degree to which we look to peaceful relations with your country. Taking into account that a gun can shoot without anyone pulling the trigger—fewer guns means less possibility. I do not want the danger to the U.S. to be any more than it is for the Soviet Union.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Yesterday you made a constructive proposal on chemical weapons.

Chairman Gorbachev: As I said when hearing it—we believe its two broad elements: the global ban and the U.S. plan to abandon modernization form a good basis.

The President: I have a question on proliferation.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes?

The President: I know you were not convinced that the Libyan plant was a chemical weapons plant but as we go along we should try to speak out against these kinds of incidents. People talk about chemical weapons as a poor man's atomic bomb—horrible weapons—as our experts discuss the proposals, I would like to see if we can't see if there is a position that we can agree on proliferation.

Chairman Gorbachev: Our position is the same. We are against proliferation. I would like our Ministers to work out more specific steps.

The President: We are vulnerable to the argument by small states that we have them. It will be good if we can cooperate.

Chairman Gorbachev: Sure we can cooperate. We can start rapidly to reduce and then we will have a moral right to press forward.

Chairman Gorbachev: How can we see the process in Europe. Let us leave the arms control file to our Ministers.

The President: I have great confidence in our Ministers. The military to military work helps too. The work that Akhromeyev and Crowe started—the more I look at the problem, I think those meetings are very helpful and should continue whatever people are involved.

Chairman Gorbachev: We discussed it among ourselves. It is interesting that even when we are not at the same table we seem to be discussing the same issues.

The President: Those talks can make a huge difference. Our military has clout with NATO—the European counterparts of NATO won't do exactly what the JCS says—but as we are shifting as we proceed—the military to military contacts are very important.

Now on to Europe. You are closer but I want to make a comment.

We have been surprised at the rapidity of change and noted your personal reaction and that of the Soviet side to these changes. Yesterday you and I discussed, without much detail, German reunification. We cannot be asked to disapprove of German reunification. I realize that this is a highly sensitive subject and we have tried to conduct ourselves with restraint. I do not want to be positioned in a provocative way.

[Gorbachev turns and asks clarification from translator.]

I sent a high level delegation to Poland—top industrialists and labor leaders—not to provoke difficulties for the Soviet Union. Rather, it goes to explain from our standpoint what works in the economy.

We are well aware of the Helsinki language about borders and now I am anxious to hear from you. How do you see beyond the status quo?

Chairman Gorbachev: First, I reject the remark that we are closer to Europe. We are equally involved and integrated. We are well aware of your involvement and any approach that rejects the involvement and role for the U.S. would be unrealistic and unconstructive. It would be a mistake. Acceptance of your role is a basic point with us.

The President: What I meant was that we haven't been that close to Eastern Europe but want to become closer without damaging Soviet interests. We are

involved, of course. We lead NATO. But you have been more the catalyst for change in a productive way.

Chairman Gorbachev: I took advantage of that remark to reaffirm our position because there has been speculation. You have remarked about change in Europe. Something fundamental is happening and change in Western Europe is no less fundamental. A few months ago I talked to the Trilateral Commission—Giscard, Nakasone and Kissinger. Yes. It was coordinated by Rockefeller and it was a very interesting group. I guess they all have plenty of time now.

The President: They have money too.

Chairman Gorbachev: President Giscard made remarks and said to me that I must be ready to deal with a United Federation of Europe—a Federated State of Western Europe. He said that economic integration is taking place now at all levels as 1992 approaches and that political structures will also develop—perhaps even supernational [sic] structures.

As Europeans, we try to put this into the context of the “common European house.” I would like you to agree to give more thorough consideration to this idea because both sides have an interest. Both must—now that the whole of Europe is in a period of flux.

The President: I agree.

Chairman Gorbachev: As we see it, the draw between East and West is an objective process where the countries of Europe will become closer to each other. European countries will be more compatible and this is another aspect of profound change. Our viewpoint—shared by all Europeans—even in nuances as a part of Kohl our view is that we should do everything within the Helsinki context rather than ruining what has been done.

A Helsinki II Summit to develop new criteria for this new phase would be a good idea. It could be attended by all who signed the Helsinki Final Act—the U.S., Canada, the Vatican, the USSR and all the Europeans. A prudent and responsible approach is important.

This would be to make sure the process doesn’t result in less stability. We need to improve stability and limit the damage and make sure not to ruin the instruments that have maintained the balance but to transform the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO. They should change to a more political than military nature. Our generals have already started contacts but we need more.

We need to let the economic communities interact. COMECON is looking to make changes to make it more compatible with the world economy. Such an approach must be free from surprises.

Now let me mention a concept of U.S. origin: The division of Europe should be overcome on the basis of Western values.

If policy is made on that assumption the situation could become quite messy. You used to make similar accusations against the USSR—the export of revolution.

This is not a simple phase but a time of great responsibility. Eastern Europe is changing to be more open, democratic and to respect universal human values.

It is moving closer to the economic arrangements of the world economy. This opens up the possibility for a tranquil and placid pause.

It is dangerous here to try to force the issues—to push it artificially in order to achieve an advantage. I believe that various options could come up in the future. We cannot expect it to be painless. The situation is acute because enormous societal forces are coming into play.

I have seen that in the Soviet Union with different traditions, special features—and I see how fiercely the debate is raging about our economy and our political institutions as we move toward democracy. How to transform our federation.

Prime Minister Mulroney interrogated me on how to solve this problem and discussed our experience and that of Canada. He told me things about Quebec and its ambitions—separatism in Quebec. I mentioned similar trends in the Soviet Union.

I wonder why the U.S. Congress is so concerned about the Soviet federation instead of trying to help Canada which is much closer and more important to you.

We can predict that developments in Europe will not always be smooth but overall I look at things optimistically. You know, analyzing things and responding to unfolding events. You can tremble and some panic but if you look at it philosophically—things fall into place. We are dealing with fundamental processes if nations and peoples are involved in the developments—one can't expect it to be smooth. It is important to see that. These changes are deep and historical. We should not undermine this process but seize opportunities to bring together East and West. Differences will still exist. I look at the differences within the USSR and the US and Europe—there are big ones.

We want mutual understanding of what is happening and we have such an understanding. Because we are aware that the process is moving we would like to have interaction so that we don't let the process scatter so as not to find ourselves in a chaotic situation that would stop the process and throw us back. This is a special period.

The President: Let me ask you to clarify. You expressed reservations about "Western values." I can understand if this is presented with arrogance or chauvinistic pride—that would be bad. But as we discuss these matters inside NATO and Western Europe there is naturally talk of Western values.

A Western value is glasnost—openness—it isn't our word but we value lively debate, pluralism and openness. Western values are free markets and openness. But it is not something new with us. These common values have been there in U.S.-Western European relations for a long time.

As we see changes that are a long [sic] the lines of what we talked about—its not in hostility that "Western values" is written. I want to be sure of the difficulty you have in our using this term—I don't want to complicate anything.

Chairman Gorbachev: Our main principle from which we proceed is the right of each country to make its own choices and also the right of nations to change

that initial choice. It can be painful but it is an internal matter. The U.S. is committed to a certain political, cultural, and economic choice. Let others make their choices. What God they pray to? What to worship? What is important is change and renewal in East and West and a process that is drawing us closer together. The developments will not be a copy of Swedish, Russian or any other way. It will be something redefined by the new age in the world and in Europe. The thing is there is no fear as regards any system—people are looking for their own variant.

The President: We don't differ. Self-determination is a value we endorse and it is openness that permits self-determination. Western values does not mean the imposition of our system on Czechoslovakia, the GDR or Romania.

Chairman Gorbachev: That is important for us—these fundamental changes now bring nations closer together. I see how Eastern Europe is finding new forms of resolving the development of social problems—trade and technology and science. Taking processes developed in other countries too. It is a good process. Political and practical affairs will go easier if our understanding is similar.

Changes will take place constructively and cooperatively in order to allow that process to attain new phases in European civilization and world civilization. We have been persuaded that there should not be one simple model in the socialist or capitalist world.

The President: I told Primakov that when he said he wanted to build a Parliament like ours. I said, "Don't copy us. We have a good system."

Chairman Gorbachev: I think your advice is appropriate and I must accept only those things that are organic.

Secretary Baker: You emphasize the term self-determination. You have said governments should choose their form. We agree as long as people can choose their governments. That is what we mean by Western values—not that there should be specific forms imposed.

Chairman Gorbachev: But when someone says he has the final truth you have to expect trouble.

The President: Yes.

Secretary Baker: There is great nervousness about what reunification of Germany would mean and we say on the basis of Western values and we mean openness and pluralism because no one wants the kind of Germany we had between 1937 and 1941.

Chairman Gorbachev: Yakovlev asked why are openness, glasnost and pluralism western values?

The President: Because this has been our solid foundation.

Chairman Gorbachev: We share those values. Those are common values.

The President: It is much more apparent that we share those values today than twenty years ago.

Chairman Gorbachev: That is important. If we started to talk about the collapse of capitalism or of socialism—nothing good would come of it. We should see things as they are so as not to become involved in propaganda.

Mr. Yakovlev: If one were to insist on calling these Western values we could start talking about Eastern or Chinese values. That would be ideological.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Western values—Western strength. Some are saying it is because of Western strength.

The President: Let's try to avoid words that cause you concern or us concern. We are saluting the values.

Chairman Gorbachev: The direction of these changes is that we are becoming more open and an organic integration is taking place. We are abandoning those things that divide us. How do you call that? We should say a "new relationship." Let us not make it a theological debate. That led to religious wars and we should have learned from that.

Secretary Baker: Democratic values?

Chairman Gorbachev: Yes.

The President: I am glad we had this conversation.

Chairman Gorbachev: I wanted to have this discussion take place.

Now to the Middle East. What should we be doing? We've probed Arafat to the edge and while he is still alive something should be done.

The President: There was some encouraging news yesterday to Secretary Baker that Arafat may be ready to go forward with the ten points.

One suggestion relating to your possible diplomatic relations with Israel. I recognize that it is your internal matter but recognition of Israel diplomatically would be good. Some say, "Why would the President suggest that—Israel is our closest friend?" I think it would fit your requirements. We are trying to get the Palestinians and Israelis to engage in dialogue. The Baker five points were given to Shevardnadze.

Chairman Gorbachev: I know them better than the ten.

The President: Shamir has been pulled to the right by Sharon and Levy in his own party. It is difficult to get him to move.

Chairman Gorbachev: A couple of points. I felt that we have never had more favorable circumstances than now to settle the Middle East conflict. I am able to say that because we are involved together. The U.S. was trying to solve the Middle East problem alone for many years. Alone you were unable to do that—cooperation has been established again and we are ready to contribute constructively.

Pushing Arafat in the appropriate direction has given us new opportunities that could evaporate. Already he is considered a traitor by many in the PLO and other Arabs. I welcome the U.S.-PLO dialogue because maybe you can get your own clarification of Arafat's position which is constructive. On relations with Israel it is not a problem for us. [To Shevardnadze] How many times have you been to Middle East?

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Six.

Chairman Gorbachev: As soon as we see progress on the settlement—we will recognize Israel. We have many interests in common. Many people from the USSR are living in Israel and we have good contacts with Jewish organizations, even those based in your country.

I am worried that the process of consolidation among Arabs may at some point make it so they could decide not to involve the US or the USSR. The opportunity must be grasped.

The President: We would be pleased to see you have diplomatic relations with Israel. The mood of blanket endorsement of everything that Israel wants has been changed by the Entifadah [sic]. Israel is still a staunch ally but the mood now is that we must solve the problem.

I might say on Lebanon, just across the border that we strongly supported the Tripartite effort. We have no influence with Aoun and deplore the killing of the President and are concerned about the massive Syrian presence. If Aoun can be persuaded to step aside, Lebanon can be the peaceful place we once knew.

Chairman Gorbachev: We have become involved. I received representatives of the Tripartite group and gave my support. We have been interacting with Syria, the Holy See and France. Movement was afoot before the President was killed. I shall continue efforts to support the Trilateral plan. The Middle East and Lebanon—we must instruct our Foreign Ministers to think of new ways.

The President: [To Baker] You had a comment?

Secretary Baker: Yes.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Let me clarify on Syria. We both support the newly elected President. The relationship between Lebanon and Syria is up to them. They will find a way.

Secretary Baker: Are you not concerned that Syria, with the blessing of the President, will try to clear out Aoun and his enclave?

Chairman Gorbachev: We noticed what you said—that the Syrians will take action but we don't have that information.

The President: It is not that they are massed for immediate action—various reports say they might.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: The Syrians have said they don't want to be in Lebanon permanently and are acting in the Tripartite spirit.

The President: We moved our embassy and Aoun was upset with us and threatened our people.

Chairman Gorbachev: This is a useful exchange on the Middle East and Lebanon.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: One more point. The Mubarak plan. After it appeared there seemed to be potential for U.S.-Soviet cooperation. But we have been consulting less and less.

President Gorbachev: Will Secretary Baker go it alone?

Secretary Baker: You won't see me on a plane to the Middle East.

The President: You and I can't dictate an outcome in the Middle East. If anyone thinks we can—that will be counterproductive.

Chairman Gorbachev: I agree. We have to cooperate but not to dictate.

The President: We welcome cooperation. Your experts have noticed a change in U.S. policy on this subject.

Secretary Baker: There have been extensive talks with Primakov and Tarasov in connection with the working groups.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: It happened after your submitted your plan. It would have been better before submitting your plan.

Chairman Gorbachev: I want to ask Shevardnadze to say words in regards to Afghanistan.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: You are leaving the most difficult to me.

The President: Not the most difficult on our agenda. Chairman Gorbachev and I had discussion on what we thought was most difficult.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: The Secretary and I had detailed discussions and Gorbachev asked what was its outcome. We need to think about the future instead of bickering about the past. We need to begin practical cooperation and help the Afghans begin an inter-Afghan dialogue. That is the purpose of the conference. That would set up an interim council to discuss and set up free elections to be monitored by the UN. Not only the Kabul regime, but some groups including the King seem to agree.

The second part would be an international conference under the UN. I think this idea deserves attention.

The third part concerns the supply of weapons. I told the Secretary that we are ready to stop arms on a reciprocal basis and a ceasefire to force the parties to the conflict to stop fighting. The sentiment of the field commanders and also in the Peshawar opposition is such that we need to do this.

I have noted the U.S. suggestion about a transitional stage. I believe a transitional stage deserves attention while working around the elements so a constructive dialogue is possible. As for Pakistani violations of Geneva I—we won't raise it here but it should be discussed quietly.

Chairman Gorbachev: Why am I always returning to this question? In talks with the previous President I remember that we said that a military solution was not possible and that Geneva was a difficult process. But we managed and achieved a withdrawal of Soviet forces and that attempt must be completed by a settlement.

The President: Rest assured, I want to see it settled. We have no desire to see a hostile regime on your border.

Chairman Gorbachev: We also would not want to see an Afghan regime that is hostile to the U.S. either.

The President: Najibullah is a major hang-up. About that the resistance groups are united. They all say that reconciliation is impossible with him there. The problem is the role for the King has gone backwards.

Chairman Gorbachev: On the one hand, you say everyone rejects Najibullah. But in the year since the withdrawal—his position is stronger and many commanders and tribal authorities are cooperating with him.

The President: Not enthusiastically. If you're saying that there is a ground swell of support for Najibullah then that is news to me. It is the first I've heard of it.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I visited Kabul seven times. I am connected and I can confirm that his prestige and influence is growing. The opposition—almost everyone is talking to Najibullah.

The decreasing influence of the King is not a good thing. He represents the moderate wing. Who would gain power—Hekmatyar? That would be a terrible outcome.

The President: There is no love loss [sic] between us and Hekmatyar.

Chairman Gorbachev: Let me say more. Speaking realistically—one problem is the opposition; two is Najibullah himself; three is the Najibullah regime. Let's start the process between them.

The President: The Mujahadeen...

Chairman Gorbachev: They are putting out an ultimatum. What shall we do? Invade and remove Najibullah?

Secretary Baker: Stop sending him \$300 million.

Chairman Gorbachev: Mr. Secretary you promised that he would collapse in three months. Don't simplify things.

The President: I am surprised to hear that tribal leaders talk with him.

Chairman Gorbachev: Ask Hekmatyar if he is in contact with Najibullah?

The President: We are not in contact with him.

General Scowcroft: We are not preventing contact between the Mujahadeen and Najibullah.

Chairman Gorbachev: Neither are we. We are aware of only a little of what is going on and we have been above board. They are acting in their own way and it is hard to understand.

Secretary Baker: We have to sell the Mujahadeen to get the transition process going. They insist that after it is over—Najibullah would step down and then the UN suggestion would make sense. Here to fore the Muj wouldn't even discuss Najibullah. We suggested to start with him and that he would then step down and let a legitimate government begin.

Chairman Gorbachev: This can be discussed.

Secretary Baker: If the Muj agreed to have members of the PDPA but not Najibullah and his closest associates?

Chairman [sic] Gorbachev: I believe this is something to decide within the framework but the idea of a transitional process is appropriate and the factions will stay as now. We cannot order Najibullah out. If they decide he should go, O.K. It is the Afghan's process and it is a developing process. No one can force him.

Secretary Baker: without recognition that there will be a transfer of power the Muj won't come to the table.

Chairman Gorbachev: From whom are they to get this information? If they are so sure of themselves why are they worried?

Secretary Baker: I am not sure they are so confident. For them to consider coming to table they need to know that Najibullah is willing to step down at the end.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: It is worth discussion. Your information is not right. The opposition is falling apart.

Chairman Gorbachev: What next? The press conference? A chat?

The President: The statements and then we can take questions.

Any major issues that we didn't talk about? Ethiopia, Mengistu.

Chairman Gorbachev: No we didn't cover that but we can say that the situation in Africa has been touched upon. The Namibian settlement process—we could mention our satisfaction. Ethiopia could be mentioned—the Carter mission.

The President: That is unofficial.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 04-1944-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 86: Memorandum from Rice to Scowcroft

December 5, 1989

The contrast between the NSC meetings before Malta (“dampen expectations,” no negotiating arms control) and after Malta comes through clearly in this concise cover memo from Soviet specialist Condoleezza Rice to the national security adviser enclosing the briefing memo and talking points that Scowcroft would then forward to President Bush. “The President has now committed himself to an ambitious arms control agenda before the June 1990 summit” and “bureaucracy must not get in the way,” Rice writes. If such urgency had been present at the White House earlier in 1989, perhaps it would not have taken two more years to finish the START Treaty or make the withdrawals of nuclear weapons that would not be accomplished until a month after the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev.

I. PURPOSE

The goal of this meeting is to review commitments that you made to Gorbachev on arms control and to kick-start the bureaucracy to meet the timelines that you set for the 1990 Summit.

II. BACKGROUND

As a result of the Malta meeting, we have an ambitious arms control agenda ahead of us. There are a number of controversial START issues that must be resolved urgently if we are to complete the work on a variety of U.S. positions before Jim Baker’s Ministerials—the first of which is in less than eight weeks. In addition, as Dick Cheney and Collin Powell related last time, we also need to find a way to move CFE along. Finally, work is lagging on implementing your chemical weapons initiative.

The members of the NSC will need to hear from you the high priority that you place on meeting your commitments to Gorbachev, and that doing so will require *their* personal sustained involvement. As you told Gorbachev, you cannot afford to let the bureaucracy get in the way of meeting these timelines.

We came out of Malta with a lot of momentum and have laid to rest the notion—for now—that the Administration is dragging its feet and is unwilling to engage the Soviets. The critical foreign policy test before us now is to make certain that we do not lose that momentum and that the interagency process supports the effort to meet the commitments that you made to Gorbachev. [...]

POINTS TO BE MADE AT MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

- As you know I talked at the Cabinet Meeting in some detail about my meetings with Gorbachev and the follow-on discussions with the Allies.
- The purpose of this NSC meeting to emphasize that we must get the work done so that we can meet the timelines and commitments established at Malta.
- I proposed the following to Gorbachev on economic relations:
- Immediate negotiation of a trade agreement so that when the Supreme Soviet codifies its emigration laws, I can waive Jackson-Vanik. I am aiming to be able to announce MFN status for the Soviet Union at the 1990 Summit.
- I also proposed to Gorbachev that we discuss the development of a bilateral investment treaty.
- I informed the Soviets that I intend to tell the members of GATT *now* that I will support GATT observer status for the Soviet Union when the Uruguay Round is completed.
- I proposed expanding U.S.-Soviet technical economic cooperation and presented him with a paper proposing specific economic projects, covering topics such as finance, agriculture, statistics, small business development, budgetary and tax policy, a stock exchange, and antimonopoly policy.
- I told him that I would explore with Congress the lifting of statutory restrictions on export credits and guarantees after a Jackson-Vanik waiver is granted.
- There is a lot of work to do to meet this agenda and Nick you will need to work with Jim Baker, Bob Mosbacher, Clayton and Carla to make sure that we are ready for 1990.
- We have even tighter timelines on arms control:
- We must meet the commitments that I made to Gorbachev to fill gaps in our arms control positions and be ready to engage in intense negotiations with Moscow on the unresolved issues.
- I do not want inertia in the U.S. bureaucracy to be the cause of slippage in these timelines before the 1990 Summit.
- I look to each of you to play sustained, active personal roles to insure that high quality work gets done on time.
- I need to be able to make the necessary decisions so that we are well prepared for the upcoming Ministerials and the Summit.
- Obviously, we are not going to cave in on issues that are important to our security but I want to be sure that we make our best effort to get this done.
- I proposed to Gorbachev that we accelerate the START process in order to resolve all substantive issues and to conclude a treaty, if possible, by the 1990 Summit.
- When Jim Baker meets with Shevardnadze less than eight weeks from now, they are to work out agreements on ALCMs, non-deployed missiles and telemetry encryption.

- We also promised to table a position on most of the START issues by the time of that meeting and on all of them by the time of the next Ministerial.
- The agenda for chemical weapons and CFE is equally ambitious.
- I proposed speeding achievement of a chemical weapons ban and offered to end U.S. production of binary weapons when the multilateral convention on chemical weapons enters into force, in return for Soviet acceptance of the terms of our UN proposal to ban chemical weapons.
- I suggested that we sign an agreement at the 1990 Summit to destroy U.S. and Soviet chemical weapons down to 20 percent of the current U.S. level.
- I proposed completing work on the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (PNET) for signature at the 1990 Summit.
- Finally, I suggested that the U.S. and the Soviet Union support holding a CFE Summit to sign a CFE Treaty in 1990.
- I have asked Brent to develop a detailed work program and some ideas for the best way to organize ourselves to meet these timelines.
- He will be getting both the work program and the ideas to you shortly.

[Source: National Security Council, obtained through FOIA F-93-1217 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 87: Chernyaev Diary

January 2, 1990

In this diary excerpt, Gorbachev's senior foreign policy adviser reflects on the legacy of the Malta summit, since in the press of events he had not managed to write down his commentary. A month later, the main point about Malta for Chernyaev is the "normal" feel of the summit, the shared understanding that the Soviet Union and the United States were now partners and neither would attack the other. Therefore, the threat of nuclear war was a thing of the past, as was the Cold War itself. Chernyaev sees Gorbachev making an intentional effort at Malta to discard this old reality of a Soviet threat, of the "terror" projected by the Soviet Union in Europe through its invasions and repressions. In Malta, according to Chernyaev, Gorbachev and Bush "gave hope to all humanity."

January 2, 1990.

Glancing at my last diary entry, I realized that there was not a word about M.S.'s visit to Italy, nor the Pope, nor Malta. [...]

So: we were in Italy on November 24-30th, then Malta—on the ship "Maxim Gorky" from November 30th to December 2nd. [...]

What is this? In the past we did not know and could not understand to what terror we subjected Europe with our military might, our 1968, our Afghanistan, and the shock the Europeans felt after we installed the SS-20s. We did not want to know this: we were demonstrating socialism's power. And now Gorby has removed this terror. The country [USSR] appeared to be normal, even unfortunate.

This is it! This is why now Gorbachev is not only the "man of the year" but also the "man of the decade." Again and again: with our revolutions we give more to others than to ourselves.

We arrived at Malta at night, and again we were met with pandemonium by the Palace in honor of Gorby's visit.

About Malta—Gorbachev-Bush. A lot has been written on this "event of the century," about everything related to it. Arbatov, who hates expenditures on naval forces, expressed himself in his sarcastically-Jewish manner: I told you that the naval forces are useless, plus the rightness of "Socialist Realism" (this is regarding the fact that we provided the ship "Maxim Gorky." Initially the plan was to conduct the meetings in turn on the American frigate and our cruiser, but a storm got in the way. We had to conduct the talks on our ship).

Now, getting to the point. Despite the sensational nature of the event, I did not for a second feel aspiration. To me (maybe because I am tired, constantly worried not to forget or miss something) it seemed like a regular, normal affair... M.S. acted like he and Bush were old pals—frank and simple, and openly well-intentioned.

M.S. knows that the negotiations over how many missiles we cut back today or tomorrow are not the deciding factor. The deciding factor is that the USSR and U.S. are no longer enemies. This is the most important thing.⁴⁷ Khrushchev also wanted this, but ideology got in the way. He wanted to win the “war” in favor of socialism and to bury capitalism, without starting a war or spilling a drop of blood.

M.S. does not believe in any ideology. He often says: are we supposed to shoot at each other because we believe in different gods? This is not just a funny metaphor, it is his true conviction.

He knows that nobody will start a war against us. There is no real military threat. We need the army for the superpower prestige, and internally because there is nothing we can do with it right now. It has turned into an organic burden on society. There are more marshals and generals in Moscow than in the rest of the world! This is a political and social problem. It is fine that Arbatov and “Ogonek”⁴⁸ are yelping at Yazov and Akhromeyev and tearing at their coattails, they’re in a good spot! But what is it like for Gorbachev with this horde and armada!

In a word, Gorbachev played up the symbolism so beloved by people in the West to do away with the “Soviet threat.” Truly, it is unlikely that anybody believes in it anymore, except for the most unenlightened... For in reality it does not exist while there is Gorbachev and *perestroika*.

Both of them (M.S. and Bush) truly looked “good” together—and gave hope to all of humanity. [...]

[Source: *Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, Manuscript on file at the National Security Archive. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

⁴⁷ Emphasis in the original. [Editors]

⁴⁸ An illustrated weekly magazine and key *glasnost* outlet, with a progressive editor, Vitaly Korotich. [Editors]

Chapter 7

THE WASHINGTON AND CAMP
DAVID SUMMIT, 1990

The Washington summit at the end of May and early June 1990 showcased the American president, George H.W. Bush, at his most statesmanlike, and the Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, on the downward slope of what would be, for him and for hopes of reform in the Soviet Union, a “truly tragic” year.¹

Gorbachev for the first time appeared at a superpower summit as supplicant rather than equal, implicitly seeking American economic help (his aides would do so explicitly), and practically begging Bush to proceed with the long-stalled “most favored nation” trade agreement. This would require the American leader to overrule his top advisers and his domestic opposition, which took exception to Soviet strong-arm tactics against the dissident Baltic republics. Yet Bush would do so, at the last minute of the summit, and Soviet coercion of Lithuania would ease; but Bush would get little credit for his statesmanship, and Gorbachev would see little aid—the benefits of the trade agreement would take years to flow, and by then the Soviet Union was no more.²

The most memorable moment for the American side at the Washington summit centered on Gorbachev’s apparent agreement to German self-determination, not only on unification but on alliances—meaning NATO membership. According to both the Russian- and English-language transcripts, Gorbachev twice affirmed the Helsinki Final Act principle that nations have the right to choose their own alliances—the second time under direct questioning from Bush, whose aides passed him notes pressing him to ask and ask again.³ Meanwhile, the Soviet delegation practically erupted against Gorbachev going beyond his brief, especially the official holding the German portfolio, Valentin Falin, and the general secretary’s top military aide, Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev. In the Bush-Scowcroft memoir, Bush remarks, “It was an unbelievable scene, the likes of which none of us had ever seen before—virtually open rebellion against a Soviet leader.”⁴

Subsequently, the literature would make extravagant claims for the importance of the summit, especially in accounts written by American insiders. National Security Council staffers Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, for example, called the summit “a turning point. From this time on, Gorbachev never again

¹ Anatoly Chernyaev, Diary “Afterword 1990,” p. 78. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf.

² Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*, pp. 202–204.

³ Document No. 99.

⁴ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 283.

voiced adamant opposition to Germany's presence in NATO."⁵ Their colleague (and analytical competitor) Robert Hutchings went even further in his narrative, writing, "The Bush-Gorbachev Summit thus emerged as the most important U.S.-Soviet meeting ever held. It was a summit essentially unlike any that had gone before."⁶ Even foreign authors who have made careers out of questioning the Amerocentric narrative of the end of the Cold War echo this "turning point" line of thinking, most notably the French historian Frederic Bozo in his Mitterrand-centric account.⁷ Perhaps it was the unanimity of the Americans present (who got their versions to the public before the Soviets did), the vividness of the scene (Gorbachev's aides in rebellion), the striking quotes in the Bush-Scowcroft memoir (published 14 years before the American memcon was declassified), that took even the best historians' eyes off the main event of German unification—the West German negotiations with Gorbachev.

Helmut Kohl was the lone holdout on the "turning point" thesis. When Bush excitedly called Kohl during the summit to let him know about the Gorbachev concession, Kohl seemed less than impressed. Zelikow and Rice concluded that Kohl "had not caught the point about Gorbachev's conceding Germany's right to choose to be in NATO," even though Bush kept pressing it. "It was if the information was so startling that, even if Bush put a headline on it, it simply did not register."⁸ However, a close reading of the telcon shows Kohl well understood the point, but also knew that much more would need to be done, especially financially. Kohl's actual response to Bush was: "Precisely. We believe that. But we still have to change his mind. George, I think the economic side is more important."⁹

Those watching American television would have seen Gorbachev himself make this point. Emerging from the White House on May 31, 1990, the Soviet leader held an impromptu press conference for the cameras. He said the U.S.-Soviet differences over Germany had "somewhat narrowed," but "I think it is not here that the German question will be resolved."¹⁰ The foreign ministers would need to take up the discussion, Gorbachev said. But what he meant was that the Soviets would pursue it with Kohl.

Within days of the summit, this more sober reality had sunk in. Washington's classified briefing paper sent to U.S. embassies afterwards advised: "It is not

⁵ Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*, p. 283.

⁶ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 131. But Hutchings is too scrupulous a scholar to sustain this argument and by the end of this section of his book he consigns the summit to the status of "essential backdrop for the dramatic meeting in the Caucasus between Kohl and Gorbachev," p. 137.

⁷ Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, p. 254.

⁸ Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*, p. 281.

⁹ Kohl-Bush telcon, June 1, 1990. <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1990-06-01-Kohl.pdf>.

¹⁰ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 221.

clear what Gorbachev's acceptance of the principle of freedom of choice means in practice." Far from a turning point, the paper noted, "no breakthroughs were made" on Germany, and while "Gorbachev did not object" when Bush "said in his press conference that the alliance membership was a matter for the Germans to decide, consistent with the Helsinki Final Act," "Soviet thinking seems still to be in flux and characterized by many internal contradictions."¹¹

There was quite a backstory to Gorbachev's self-determination stance. After all, his speech at the United Nations in December 1988 had emphasized "freedom of choice" as a "universal principle to which there should be no exceptions"—a focal point of what he intended to be an "anti-Fulton" manifesto (referring to Winston Churchill's "iron curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri).¹² The persuasive reconstruction by German scholar Wolfgang Mueller of the stages of Gorbachev's thinking and acquiescence on Germany begins with the often-overlooked Soviet-FRG Joint Declaration from Gorbachev's Bonn visit in June 1989, which explicitly confirmed that all peoples should be free to choose their political and economic system. Mueller calls this a "time bomb under the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, including the GDR."¹³ In effect, Gorbachev simultaneously entertained multiple and often contradictory notions around the German question; his agreement in January and February 1990 for German self-determination on unification was a key step towards his agreement in May–July 1990 for German freedom of choice on NATO membership, just as his willingness to accept the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 represented an earlier stage of this same "new thinking."¹⁴

Gorbachev's discussions with Secretary of State James Baker and then Chancellor Kohl in February 1990 have given rise to much controversy about the subsequent NATO expansion in the 1990s, centering on Baker's assurance that "not an inch of NATO's present military jurisdiction will spread in an eastern direction."¹⁵ But in both conversations, Gorbachev made it clear that "Germans themselves should decide their own future." Baker had assured the Soviet leader of American prudence and restraint, allowing for all kinds of conditions (special treatment of the eastern zone, for example), and Kohl had come away convinced the Soviets would go along with unification, if financial aid was forthcoming. The transcripts from both the German and Soviet sides in February 1990 shows Gorbachev accepting not just U.S. troops in Europe as contributing to stability

¹¹ "Briefing Allies on Washington Summit," U.S. Department of State to U.S. Embassies in NATO Capitals, Tokyo, Seoul, Canberra, Cable 193849, June 15, 1990.

¹² See Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 311–312.

¹³ Wolfgang Mueller, "The USSR and the Reunification of Germany, 1989–90," p. 326, in Mueller, Gehler, Suppan, eds., *The Revolutions of 1989: A Handbook*.

¹⁴ See Svetlana Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989," in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, especially pp. 32–38.

¹⁵ See Thomas Blanton, "U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989," in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 93–96.

(as Gorbachev had conveyed to Bush at Malta in 1989), but some form of NATO membership for a united Germany, under a series of conditions that might even include joining the Warsaw Pact as well.¹⁶

Back in Washington, Scowcroft and his staff were alarmed. The West German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher (an often prickly coalition partner and rival of Kohl), had proposed on January 31 that a unified Germany would remain in NATO but with the eastern territory excluded, and that both NATO and the Warsaw Pact would fade into the overall Helsinki structure, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Scowcroft worried that Baker was “inadvertently aiding and abetting” Genscher, implicitly acceding to the dissolution of NATO, and that Kohl would agree to any deal if he got Moscow’s acceptance of unification, including a French-style NATO arrangement outside the military command structure. So the Americans invited Kohl (excluding Genscher) to Camp David—President Bush’s dacha—with the aim, in Bush’s words, to “keep Germany on the NATO reservation.”¹⁷

These February 24–25, 1990, discussions with Kohl essentially cemented what historian Mary Elise Sarotte has termed the “prefab” solution to the German question.¹⁸ Kohl summed up the situation this way: “The Soviets are negotiating. But this may end up as a matter of cash. They need money.” Yet the Americans didn’t offer a dime at Camp David. Bush responded, “What worries me is talk that Germany must not stay in NATO. To hell with that. We prevailed and they didn’t. We can’t let the Soviets clutch victory from the jaws of defeat.” Kohl repeated his point: “There will be concerns for the Soviets if Germany remains in NATO, for their security. And they will want to get something in return.” To which Bush replied: “You’ve got deep pockets” (implying the U.S. did not and would not).¹⁹

When President Bush called Gorbachev on February 28, after Kohl’s trip to Washington, he told the Soviet leader, “The Chancellor and I agreed that the unified Germany should remain in NATO; that American troops will remain in Europe as long as the Europeans want them; and that there needs to be a special status for the former territory of the GDR.” Gorbachev responded, “I must disappoint you—we do not yet have a common understanding with Chancellor Kohl.... Why do Western countries want to incorporate them into one alliance? If we find that this would negatively effect [sic] the Soviet Union, we would have to think long and hard about it.”²⁰ Note the indeterminacy of this response, a step back

¹⁶ See Gorbachev’s memcon with Baker and Baker’s letter to Kohl, both on February 9, 1990, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, pp. 675–687.

¹⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 236, 243, 250.

¹⁸ Sarotte, 1989, pp. 195–214. The phrase “prefab model” appears on p. 200.

¹⁹ Document No. 91.

²⁰ Document No. 92.

from Gorbachev's "unacceptable" phrasing to Baker during their discussion earlier in February about any possible expansion of NATO eastward.

Gorbachev did keep using the word "unacceptable" (to East German delegations in February and March, and the Pope in April)²¹ and the phrase "we cannot accept" Germany solely in NATO (to Baker in May) both before and after the pivotal March 18 elections in East Germany.²² Similarly, the Politburo's instructions for the summit reiterated that "it would be politically and psychologically unacceptable for us to see a united Germany in NATO."²³

There would be outbursts all spring, driven by Gorbachev's own frustrations and the rising tide of Soviet military and conservative bitterness at the loss of Stalin's empire. One Moscow discussion in early May 1990 featured Gorbachev blustering about cutting off all arms control talks to prevent German unification. "Do not let Germany into NATO and that's that! I will risk breaking the Vienna negotiations, if it comes to that." Chernyaev had to write his boss to remind him of his own goals, which were: not to make an enemy of Germany (key to any Soviet economic future), encourage European integration, and stop worrying about Cold War notions of security. Chernyaev points out that even if Poland was in NATO (this is May 1990), it would not really threaten Soviet security.²⁴

The key moment for German unification happened on March 18, 1990, when the East Germans surprised most observers by voting for Kohl's Christian Democrats and his offered deutschmarks. By that point, events on the ground were driving the process. And the speed with which reunification proceeded in 1990 overwhelmed any "common home" ideas. Even French President François Mitterrand, no fan of a unified Germany, saw that reality clearly enough to have a "brutal" conversation with Gorbachev when he visited Moscow on May 25. The French leader disabused Gorbachev of the dual alliance "fantasy" (Germany in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact) and told him they could not "forbid unified Germany from choosing its alliances as agreed in Helsinki."²⁵

The problem for Gorbachev was how to avoid the scenario requested by Margaret Thatcher in September 1989, that Moscow prevent German unification "with our hands" (Chernyaev's phrase), showing no fingerprints from Downing Street or elsewhere. Remarkably, Thatcher told Gorbachev that Bush did not want unification either—an interesting message in the context of the "Europe

²¹ Gorbachev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 19, p. 262, Gorbachev letter to the Pope, April 14, 1990.

²² See William Taubman, *Gorbachev* (Norton, 2016 forthcoming), author's manuscript, Ch. 15, p. 12.

²³ Politburo Instructions, May 16, 1990, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Fond 89, Opis 10, doc 61.

²⁴ Chernyaev memo to Gorbachev, May 4, 1990; Anatoly Chernyaev's diary, 1990, May 5 entry, p. 29. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf.

²⁵ Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, p. 253.

whole and free” rhetoric—but by December 1989 Kohl and the evident collapse of the GDR had changed Bush’s mind.²⁶ By February 1990, Bush would write in his diary, “Thatcher now has much more concern about a unified Germany than about a Soviet threat.”²⁷ But Gorbachev, urged on by Chernyaev and Shevardnadze, clearly saw Germany as the door to European integration, and as the Soviet Union’s most important economic partner. Andrei Grachev astutely observed, “[a]ll the attempted bargaining [by Gorbachev] about the final formula for German association with NATO was therefore much more a question of form than serious content; Gorbachev was trying to gain needed time in order to let public opinion at home adjust to the new reality, to the new type of relations that were taking shape in the Soviet Union’s relations with Germany as well as with the West in general. At the same time he was hoping to get at least partial political compensation from his Western partners for what he believed to be his major contribution to the end of the Cold War.”²⁸

Ultimately, time ran out on Gorbachev, and the only compensation in sight came from West Germany. Kohl had won a great deal of good will in Moscow as early as January 1990, when he responded quickly to a plea from Shevardnadze through Kohl’s top aide, Horst Teltschik, for food aid during a harsh Russian winter. Within three weeks, some 52,000 tons of German canned beef (plus pork, butter, milk powder and cheese) were on their way to Moscow.²⁹ When a similar plea for a loan came from Shevardnadze in April, Teltschik launched a secret mission to Moscow on May 13 with two top German bankers, and the Kohl government organized an immediate government-guaranteed loan of five billion DM.³⁰

Financial aid would come up over and over during 1990, although the NATO issue would dominate discussions. The Americans had worked with Kohl (and with NATO secretary-general Manfred Woerner) to repackage, creatively, a series of nine assurances for Moscow about reforming NATO, limiting German military strength, speeding up arms reductions, and addressing Soviet security concerns. They also set the dates for the next NATO summit (July 5–6) so that announcement of the new NATO posture would help Gorbachev during his Party Congress.³¹

When Baker went to Moscow for meetings with Shevardnadze on May 17 and with Gorbachev the next day, the American did not repeat Bush’s formulation to Shevardnadze on April 6: “a Europe whole and free, or as you call

²⁶ See Blanton and Savranskaya, “Thatcher’s Foreign Policy ‘Failure,’” *Foreignpolicy.com*, April 9, 2013; and Savranskaya and Blanton, eds., *The Thatcher-Gorbachev Conversations*, National Security Archive electronic briefing book No. 422, April 13, 2013, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB422/>.

²⁷ Bush, *All the Best, George Bush*, p. 460.

²⁸ Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*, pp. 157–158.

²⁹ Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name*, pp. 350–351, quoting the Teltschik memoir.

³⁰ Sarotte, 1989, p. 159.

³¹ Sarotte, 1989, pp. 161–163.

it, a common European home. A[n] idea that is very close to our own.”³² Instead, Baker dismissed the common home concept as “a wonderful dream, but only a dream.” Gorbachev insisted that Germany should follow the example of France—in NATO but with independent command—and if the Soviets could not persuade the Americans on this, “then I will say to the President that we want to enter NATO. After all, you said that NATO wasn’t directed against us, you said it was a new Europe, so why shouldn’t we apply?” Baker deflected any such idea, kept coming back to the role of NATO as a restraint on Germany, and rolled out the nine assurances, in which “not one inch eastward” had turned into merely a delayed transition period for NATO troops in the territory of the former GDR.³³

Without mentioning any *quid pro quo*, Gorbachev asked Baker for U.S. financial support. According to the American notes, Gorbachev said, “I think the best way to put it is that we need some oxygen. We are not asking for a gift. We are asking for a loan; we are asking for specifically targeted loans for specific purposes.... What I will say to the President is that we’re going to need 15 to 20 billion dollars to tide us over.” Look at the peace dividend, Gorbachev urged: “If we reach agreements on arms reductions we will both save a substantial amount of resources and money. [But] now we are in a special situation.”³⁴ The Soviet notes agree with the specifics jotted down by the Americans, but contain a much longer discussion, including Gorbachev listing examples of Defense Ministry enterprises that could quickly convert to producing consumer goods.³⁵ The bad news for Gorbachev came from Baker—that the U.S. could not finalize the trade deal giving MFN status to the USSR when the Supreme Soviet had not passed emigration reform, and Moscow retained an embargo on rebellious Lithuania. Of course, less than a week later, on May 24, Bush would announce renewal of MFN for China, despite the butchery at Tiananmen Square.

Gorbachev did not repeat the loan plea himself during the Washington summit. It was of course humiliating to fundraise when he sought to be an equal, but getting at least the trade deal came first. Later, at the end of the summit at Camp David, the subject would come up again, though not from Gorbachev directly. Shevardnadze’s rival and rising star, Yevgeny Primakov, told Baker aide Dennis Ross that the Soviet Union would need aid of “about 60 billion during the three-year period” or \$20 billion per year.³⁶ But the Americans had no intention of ponying up, despite Kohl’s urging. The Americans always had their reasons, ranging from the underwhelming economic reform plans, to the continuing Soviet subsidy for Cuba, to the lingering legal issue over U.S. property expropriated in 1918, to lack of action on emigration laws, to their own budget deficits. Kohl was the one with “deep pockets,” as Bush remarked to him in February.

³² Document No. 93.

³³ Document No. 95.

³⁴ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 273.

³⁵ Document No. 95.

³⁶ Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*, p. 205, quoting his interview with Primakov.

Going into the Washington summit, Gorbachev was on a downward slide. The instructions from his Politburo show real constraints on his usual improvisational style, and even the makeup of the Soviet delegation reflected conservative influence, as officers from the General Staff joined every arms control negotiation. The astute U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Jack Matlock, warned Washington that Gorbachev was “less a man in control and more an embattled leader.”³⁷ The growing conflict between Moscow and the dissident Baltic republics especially weakened Gorbachev, and forced him into a difficult “balancing act” between threats of force or just politico-economic pressure, and between his own reform commitments and pushback from his conservatives.³⁸

The incoherence of the various Soviet economic reform plans was on full view just before Gorbachev arrived in Washington. In April, he had announced he would use his expanded presidential powers to institute major economic reform, based on a plan authored by economist Leonid Abalkin, which included significant privatization moves as well as banking and tax changes. But when the official program was actually launched on May 23, Gorbachev’s own prime minister, Nikolay Ryzhkov—“in an act of folly or of deliberate sabotage”³⁹—blew up the program by previewing large price increases, including a three-fold rise in the price of bread scheduled for July 1. The resulting panic buying, hoarding, and shortages led the Supreme Soviet to reject the plan in June. More importantly, this moment marked the inflection point between the Center’s declining ability to manage the economy and the growing power of the “red directors” (enterprise managers), the republics, and the black marketeers to control resources for their own benefit.

As the Center’s power declined, the whole Soviet economy was contracting. What had been low rates of growth in the late 1980s (slightly more than 1 percent per year) dropped by the end of 1990 to negative growth in all the indexes, most importantly agricultural output (down 3 percent) and industrial production (down 5 percent).⁴⁰ Yet these were marginal declines in 1990 (they would get much larger by 1992); the larger crisis was not in production, but in distribution, where the factory managers and the black market operators in the growing shadow economy systematically privatized (that is, stole) state resources.⁴¹

Then, while Gorbachev was in the air flying to Washington, his critic and rival, Boris Yeltsin, won election as head of the new Russian Supreme Soviet, over Gorbachev’s choices. This political watershed established a Russian nationalist base that would ultimately become the key factor in dissolving the Soviet Union in 1991.⁴² Gorbachev’s policy choices were constricting under pressure

³⁷ Document No. 94.

³⁸ Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble*, p. 202.

³⁹ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 422.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 418–419.

⁴¹ Reddaway and Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia’s Reforms*, pp. 264–270.

⁴² The most useful and comprehensive discussion of the Yeltsin-Gorbachev rivalry may be found in O’Clery, *Moscow, December 25, 1991*.

against reform from the conservatives, and under attack from Yeltsin for not reforming enough.

Retrenchment on the Soviet side found its echo in the United States. Baker and Shevardnadze at the beginning of the year had agreed on 80 percent cuts in both countries' chemical weapons arsenals, and expected to wrap up the START treaty for signing at the Washington summit. But the U.S. military—especially the Navy—refused to go along with any on-site inspections to verify strategic arms reductions, or limits on cruise missiles, thus turning on its head President Reagan's maxim, "trust but verify." Bush signed National Security Directive 40, "Decisions on START Issues," just before the summit, and locked in delay. The very first decision in NSD 40, to protect the "Tacit Rainbow" program, illuminated the problem. Tacit Rainbow, at the time of this directive still in development and not yet in production, was intended to be a jet-powered mini-drone that could hover over enemy targets (assuming massive air attacks were on their way), wait for enemy radar to light up, then destroy those air-defense radars. This system would be cancelled in 1991 before even entering production in part because of cost overruns and also because of audit findings that decoys would be more effective against ground radars. Yet the hard line taken by U.S. START negotiators attempting to leave open this kind of U.S. option for developing non-nuclear cruise missiles added years of delay on overall cuts in strategic weapons. Likewise, the language on submarine-launched cruise missiles—allowing 875–1000 of them to be deployed without any on-board verification procedures—was more the product of U.S. military service rivalries for new weapons systems than any real assessment of U.S. national security. After all, many more U.S. cities were on the coasts and thus vulnerable to Soviet SLCMs than were Soviet cities vulnerable to U.S. SLCMs—a zero option would have made the U.S. more secure.⁴³

The overall atmosphere of crisis had been building all spring. The March 11 declaration of independence by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet drew a severe response from Moscow, including an oil and gas embargo. Bush White House files are full of memos and intelligence reports tracking Soviet pressure tactics and Baltic assertions of sovereignty, and the public debate in the U.S. assumed there would be some kind of punishment—i.e., sanctions—on the Soviet Union. However, Bush chose to use quiet persuasion, telling Gorbachev there was no chance of the MFN trade deal as long as Moscow was pressuring the Baltics. Condoleezza Rice recalled Bush was "afraid to light a match in a gas-filled room" and saw Gorbachev's survival as the best insurance policy against a crackdown. But the characteristically outrageous Lithuanian president, Vytautas Landsbergis, lashed out at Bush's decision not to impose sanctions or cancel the summit ("this

⁴³ National Security Directive 40, "Decisions on START Issues," May 16, 1990, released by the U.S. Department of State under FOIA; see also Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 424.

is Munich”) as if Gorbachev were Hitler; and columnist George Will cuttingly wrote that “Bushism is Reaganism minus the passion for freedom.”⁴⁴

Just before the summit, Bush ruminated in his diary, “I didn’t feel we had as many positive accomplishments as I had hoped. There was too much unfulfilled agenda ... enormous problems facing Gorbachev.... The man had accomplished an unbelievable amount and we should feel very lucky for that.” The Soviets and Gorbachev “needed face and standing, although everything around them was falling to pieces—their empire and their economy, and now their union. I was trying to give them that standing and face without knuckling under or acquiescing in some of their wilder plans, or giving in on issues crucial to us. We couldn’t hand them the \$20 billion of financing they wanted unless they made deep economic reforms—and even then we didn’t have the money.”⁴⁵

Standing and face would take the place of actual financial assistance. As NSC staffer Hutchings wrote, “Gorbachev needed a successful summit, and we meant to give him one.”⁴⁶ The summit featured lots of ceremonial flourishes, including the “most glittering state dinner of the year,” 21-gun artillery salutes, and lunches with Hollywood actors Gregory Peck and Jane Fonda along with science fiction author Isaac Asimov. After a couple of days at the White House, the Bushes hosted the Gorbachevs at the Camp David dacha, where the Soviet leader tried his hand at steering a golf cart and his first (and very successful) horseshoe game.⁴⁷

The substance often turned out to be more difficult than the ceremony. For instance, Gorbachev raised the issue of the trade deal during the early sessions, only to hear again how impossible it would be. Bioweapons was another sticking point. One key moment of that discussion at Camp David does not appear in any of the transcripts, but was described afterwards by Gorbachev. Bush took Gorbachev aside, “just the two of us and my interpreter,” to press the Soviet leader. Bush said that according to the CIA the Soviet Union had not complied with its international agreements on bioweapons and had not destroyed all its production facilities. Gorbachev responded that the KGB reported the mirror image to him about U.S. facilities, so “[l]et us have mutual verification. Let your people come to our weapons facilities, we also know where your facilities are, and we will come to your country.”⁴⁸

In part, this was just a deflection, since U.S. and British intelligence had hard data from two defectors about the extent of the Biopreparat empire and the deceptions by the Soviet Union. In part, Gorbachev himself had been lied to by his

⁴⁴ See Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, pp. 403–404; Naftali, *George H.W. Bush*, p. 92, for the George Will quote.

⁴⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 276–277.

⁴⁶ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 132–133.

⁴⁷ See Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, pp. 412–430, for the summary by the *Washington Post*’s chief diplomatic correspondent (state dinner description on p. 418).

⁴⁸ Hoffman, *The Dead Hand*, p. 350.

own top officials.⁴⁹ And in part, the response represented the perpetual Soviet urge for parity, respect, mutuality. Yet even such mutual inspections would hardly allay Soviet suspicions because the line was a fine one between bioweapons research intended to defend against offensive use, and research that could lead to launching an attack. And the Soviets feared inspections at locations like Stepnogorsk in Kazakhstan, where gigantic fermenters lay in wait, ready to crank out anthrax spores at the first sign of war with the West, thus revealing Soviet deception on a massive scale. Of course, U.S. hands were hardly clean. A CIA disinformation campaign indicating continued U.S. biowar efforts even after President Nixon's decision to abolish the program in 1969 certainly stoked Soviet fears and helped enable the military-industrial complex in building Biopreparat.⁵⁰

Despite the occasional bumps, candor and the commonality of geopolitical positions often fairly leap from the summit's transcripts. The nearly all-day conversation at Camp David on June 2 covered the waterfront of global issues, including remarkably compatible views on Afghanistan, where both leaders worried about radical Islamic elements and sought a Nicaragua-style solution of elections—"the problem is how to get the Resistance plugged in."⁵¹ Similarly, both Bush and Gorbachev expressed frustration with Israel over the settlements in occupied territories, and shared views on India-Pakistan, South Africa, the Koreas, and even some interest on the U.S. side in Gorbachev playing the mediator role in reaching out to Fidel Castro.

Even the MFN problem found a solution when Bush rose to the occasion. Frustrated by the formal deliberations, Gorbachev finally remonstrated with Bush personally: "After the state dinner, Gorby got me in the hall and said if we didn't have a trade agreement, it would be a disaster—it would be terrible—repeated: a disaster. He was very agitated, and almost acted like he had not received the letter I wrote...."⁵² Unexpectedly, Bush decided to go for it. He agreed to Soviet MFN status, adding a secret codicil contingent on Moscow entering into a dialogue with Lithuania, and a public condition that the Supreme Soviet pass the emigration reform. The American bureaucracy was so unready for the moment that the leaders had to wait while the MFN documents were hustled together and prepared for signing. The result was the summit's signal accomplishment. Otherwise, the meetings did not feature much of substance, other than signing the

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 346. Also L. Zaikov to M. Gorbachev, "To the President of the USSR: Report on Biological Weapons," May 15, 1990, Document 1, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB528-Kazakhstan-Nunn-Lugar-Non-Proliferation-Success/>.

⁵⁰ Leitenberg and Zilinskas, *The Soviet Biological Weapons Program*, pp. 400–406.

⁵¹ Document No. 102.

⁵² Bush, *All the Best, George Bush*, pp. 471–472. The April 29, 1990, letter to Gorbachev is on pp. 467–469, in which Bush explains the Congress would never pass the trade deal unless the Lithuania crisis is settled through dialogue, and that he, Bush, would "not be able to recommend approval" either.

chemical weapons deal that cut each side's arsenals by 80 percent even before completion of the international convention that would ban them all.⁵³

The public view of the Washington summit focused on the ceremonial success and the evident comfort levels on both sides. But there was a huge difference between the summit's reception in the U.S. and in Europe versus that in the Soviet Union. While Gorbachev played horseshoes, back home the economic reform program had crashed and burned. Matlock reported from Moscow that news of the summit could hardly "compete with concerns over food supplies and the election of Yeltsin...."⁵⁴ And on the substantive issues outstanding—Germany's membership in NATO or the possibility of Western financial support for Gorbachev—these would only be addressed in meetings later that summer, at the NATO summit in London on July 5–6, the G-7 summit in Houston on July 9, and Helmut Kohl's sit-down with Gorbachev in Moscow and in the Caucasus in July.

After Gorbachev saw Margaret Thatcher just after the Washington summit, on June 8 in the Kremlin, Thatcher's aide, Charles Powell, reported: "The main interest of the meeting lay in Gorbachev's views on Germany and NATO which are obviously still evolving. At no stage did he say that a united Germany in NATO was unacceptable. He appeared rather to be reaching round for ways to make this more palatable and explicable to his own people."⁵⁵ Gorbachev himself told Thatcher he "quite seriously and realistically understood" Bush's point of view: "His reasoning seemed to be that without a unified Germany in NATO, there would be no NATO: without NATO, there would be no United States forces in Europe: and without that, the United States would have no political influence."⁵⁶

In turn, the subsequent NATO summit's restatement of its strategy away from "forward defense," its pledge that nuclear weapons would only be a "last resort," its "non-aggression" stance toward members of the Warsaw Pact, all gave Moscow assurance that NATO was changing and no longer a threat to the USSR. The Americans took care to give Shevardnadze an advance copy of the NATO communiqué, and the Soviet foreign minister rushed out his positive assessment just in time for Gorbachev to use it in his successful domination of the Party Congress (including pre-empting Marshal Akhromeyev who was about to call the NATO language propaganda).⁵⁷

Much less encouraging for Gorbachev was the G-7 summit in Houston. Even though Bush had written the Soviet leader advising him not to ask for money, Gorbachev sent a formal fundraising letter to the group, with a request for \$20

⁵³ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 426.

⁵⁴ U.S. Embassy Moscow to U.S. Department of State, Moscow 19444, "Soviet Reactions to the Summit," June 12, 1990. U.S. State Department, Moscow 19444, obtained through FOIA in 1997 by the National Security Archive.

⁵⁵ Letter from Mr. Powell (No. 10) to Mr. Wall, June 8, 1990, No. 209 in Salmon, Hamilton and Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, p. 411.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁵⁷ Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, pp. 189–190.

billion a year for three years. According to the summit memcon, Bush opened the discussion (which came right after a more positive assessment of China) by saying: "It is impossible for the U.S. to loan money to [the] USSR at this time. I know, however, that others won't agree."⁵⁸ Immediately, Mitterrand proved the point, noting: "The Soviets will not understand our reluctance to aid Gorbachev," we are being too "timid," "hesitant," "patronizing," and "we have a chicken or egg problem—whether to provide aid first or demand reform first." Kohl piled on: "Gorbachev's letter represents a positive development. We should not treat it as we would a letter from the Congo." Canada's Brian Mulroney argued for the political gesture: if Gorbachev was "chucked out" of office "we would be in an infinitely worse position than we are today."⁵⁹ But Thatcher and Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu were with Bush, opposing aid, and the group ended up formulating a polite rejection letter to Gorbachev, offering Western experts but not money. That remained up to Kohl.

Gorbachev expected his new strategic partners to share some of the "peace dividends" that *perestroika* had brought them, both for his own and their interests.⁶⁰ But Bush thought the whole idea of a peace dividend was "weird," as he told Kohl in February.⁶¹ The American president was busy walling off the defense budget in the infamous deal with Congressional Democrats that unread his lips on taxes. Facing budget deficits and a slowing economy, Bush agreed to new taxes as early as June (just after the summit) but he was proud of having prevented the Democrats from converting the defense budget into an ATM for domestic programs, or for foreign aid of the kind that Gorbachev was seeking.⁶² One Democratic senator complained about "unreconstructed old Cold Warriors [who] strap on their rusty armor and come over here on the floor and tell us, 'Oh, no, you can't reduce this military spending.'"⁶³ In fact, the U.S. defense budget by this point had become completely unmoored from any realistic assessment of the security threats facing the country (there were none in Europe).

Helmut Kohl was less constrained: hardly any price was too great to achieve the goal of German unification. The meetings that clinched unification and NATO membership were not with the Americans in Washington, but with the West Germans in Moscow and a village called Archyz, in the Stavropol region where Gorbachev had grown up. Kohl arrived in Moscow on July 14, and almost right away, according to Chernyaev's real-time account: "Gorbachev confirms his agreement to unified Germany's entry into NATO. Kohl is decisive and

⁵⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, First Main Plenary Session of the 16th Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations, Houston, Texas, July 10, 1990 (George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, FOIA request 2000-0429-F).

⁵⁹ In addition to the Memcon, see Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 237.

⁶⁰ Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, p. 201.

⁶¹ Document No. 91: "weird thinking in our Congress today."

⁶² Nelson and Perry, 41, p. 22.

⁶³ Ibid.

assertive. He leads a clean but tough game. And it is not the bait (loans) but the fact that it is pointless to resist here, it would go against the current of events, it would be contrary to the very realities that M.S. [Gorbachev] likes to refer to so much.”⁶⁴ Yet the details, especially of the loans, would take more discussion at Archyz, followed by some of the most expensive phone calls in history, later in September.

Only once did a Gorbachev conversation with Kohl break down—on September 7, 1990, over the price to be paid, with Kohl offering 8 billion deutschmarks and Gorbachev responding he felt “like he had fallen into a trap” and a “dead end.” By September 10, Kohl had practically doubled the previous offer, including 12 billion for troop housing and resettlement, favorable exchange rates for Soviet soldiers’ worthless holdings of East German currency, and 3 billion for Moscow in interest-free credits.⁶⁵ And so the deal was done, but by then Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait, becoming the absolute focus of U.S. policy, and overshadowing concerns about the survival or success of Mikhail Gorbachev.

⁶⁴ Anatoly Chernyaev’s diary, July 15, 1990, pp. 41–42. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf.

⁶⁵ Sarotte, 1989, pp. 192–193, citing the Teltschik notes and the published German documents.

Document No. 88: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the President:
“Objectives for U.S.–Soviet Relations in 1990”

January 1990

After the “lost year,” as Chernyaev called 1989, the Bush administration in early 1990 finally begins to focus on the opportunities in U.S.-Soviet relations. In this prescient memorandum for the president, Brent Scowcroft tells Bush that his “principal challenge” is to “engage Gorbachev.” He notes correctly that Gorbachev believes that “sophisticated diplomacy can convince his adversaries not to take advantage of him.” Yet, taking advantage of every opportunity to advance U.S. interests, which Gorbachev’s policies offer, is exactly the point of Scowcroft’s advice. He provides a good assessment of Gorbachev’s domestic troubles, including the nationalist movements in the Baltics and in the Caucasus, and the uncertain future of economic reform. But the most important developments are taking place in Europe, where the Soviets have accepted the peaceful (except for Romania) revolutions in the countries of the Warsaw Pact.

Scowcroft emphasizes that the United States has to be actively involved in the German issue, but points out its special sensitivity to Gorbachev: “If there is a single external issue that might cause Moscow to reassess its course in Eastern Europe, might even bring Gorbachev down, it is the German question.” The national security adviser sees Gorbachev as Washington’s best bet for making sure the issue develops in a constructive way; he suggests that “we need to work hard to insure a successful June U.S.-Soviet summit—particularly in arms control and the economic sphere—which may boost Gorbachev’s image at home and thus his staying power.”

Yet, Scowcroft is deeply skeptical about the prospects for perestroika (success would take a “miracle”) and calls on the president to concentrate on “clearer and more realistic goals: the liberation of Eastern Europe and the consolidation of pluralist rule throughout the region; and a dramatic reduction in the Soviet military threat to Europe and the United States.” Left unmentioned is the fact that these objectives have already been partially achieved due to Gorbachev’s perestroika.

This is a rare period in which we can seek to achieve a fundamental shift in the strategic balance, particularly in Europe. The future of the Soviet Union remains cloudy, but it is clearly in our interest to do what we can to prolong the tenure of the reformers—men who have inadvertently set in motion events that have put long-standing U.S. objectives regarding the Soviet Union well within our reach: freedom for Eastern Europe; a significant reduction of the Soviet military threat to the West; and the demilitarization of Soviet foreign policy in the regions.

The principal challenge that you face in U.S.-Soviet relations this year is to engage Gorbachev effectively at a time when he faces mounting chaos at home; declining influence and authority in Eastern Europe; and uncertainty about the future of Russia’s traditional nemesis, Germany. Gorbachev’s sense of security

stems from still powerful Soviet military forces and the conviction—bordering on faith—that sophisticated diplomacy can convince his adversaries not to take advantage of him. But there are observable cracks in Moscow's confidence about the fruits of the new foreign policy—particularly where Germany is concerned—and that Soviet insecurity is likely to grow.

1990 promises to be another very difficult year for Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership. The Soviet Union's ills are worsening. Problems like whether the Communist Party of the Soviet Union should have a constitutionally guaranteed "leading role"—precluding fair competition with other parties; whether a command economy can be expected to produce the needed economic turnaround; whether to have private property; whether territory belonging to Azerbaijan should be transferred to Armenia; whether the Baltic states—and other republics—should be allowed to secede from the Union and similar issues cannot be resolved through Gorbachev's usual jawboning and equivocation. If they continue to grow worse, they could be his undoing.

Over time, the Soviet population—while appreciating his role in initiating reform—has increasingly come to see Gorbachev as ineffective and indecisive. Nationalists from Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Baltics regard him as a man without a bottom line and it is Gorbachev, not the nationalists, who has retreated in the face of repeated challenges.

The saving grace for Gorbachev at this time is that he is still regarded by moderate nationalists in the Republics as their best hope for the peaceful achievement of their goal—total independence. But moderates, to say nothing of extremists, may take Gorbachev's continuing appeasement as weakness, leading them to press even harder (as with the mass demonstrations in Lithuania when Gorbachev visits there.) That in turn will further alarm conservatives, who already see these trends as a threat to the integrity of the Union. Challenges to Gorbachev's power will probably increase markedly in the next year. Within the last two months, Gorbachev has reportedly threatened to resign twice. The first Baltic elections in Lithuania at the end of February and the 28th Party Congress, now scheduled for October 1990, will be crucial tests for him.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

The Soviet leadership will be anxious to keep U.S.-Soviet relations moving forward. Gorbachev cannot afford, in the face of mounting failures at home, to have his foreign policy line discredited too. Objectively, the U.S.-Soviet relationship has never had better prospects from our point of view. Your meeting at Malta infused U.S.-Soviet relations with a greater sense of direction—pointing toward the June Summit. On arms control, human rights and the incipient economic agenda, there is every reason to be optimistic that the progress made in 1989 can be sustained and perhaps Moscow can even be moved to be more sensible on Central America.

But it is, of course, the unraveling of communist power in Eastern Europe that has changed the strategic environment and the face of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Soviet domination of Eastern Europe has been the most enduring and most fundamental source of American conflict with Moscow. Thus, our central and overriding objective in 1990 should be to facilitate the continued and graduated withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe.

A preeminent challenge, in this regard, is to help the FRG and the Soviet Union to manage their relationship. If there is a single external issue that might cause Moscow to reassess its course in Eastern Europe, might even bring Gorbachev down, it is the German question. With that much at stake for the United States, we will need to be intensively involved in the increasingly complicated diplomatic environment in Europe which will be ever more preoccupied with the future of Germany.

While we can do little to affect internal Soviet politics, we should do what we can to prolong perestroika as long as Gorbachev continues to tolerate the diminution of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. If Moscow maintains its present course, it will be impossible within a few years for the Soviet Union to do anything about the changes in Eastern Europe, short of all out invasion. With this in mind, we need to work hard to insure a successful June U.S.-Soviet Summit—particularly in arms control and the economic sphere—which may boost Gorbachev's image at home and thus his staying power.

We must grasp while we can the chance for an early CFE agreement which would bring the conventional military balance into line with the new political realities in Eastern Europe. These reductions will also facilitate the orderly withdrawal of Soviet military power from the territory of its former allies. Rapid progress toward an "Open Skies" accord also would institutionalize Soviet openness on an unprecedented scale.

Finally, it is important that you continue to engage Gorbachev personally while emphasizing that it is the process of perestroika, not the man, on which U.S. policy is based.

As 1990 begins, the uncertainties surrounding the future of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev have only multiplied. At present, Gorbachev appears to be playing for time in the hope that, by some miracle, perestroika will succeed in creating a stable and prosperous Soviet Union. We have clearer and more realistic goals: the liberation of Eastern Europe and the consolidation of pluralist rule throughout the region; and a dramatic reduction in the Soviet military threat to Europe and the United States.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-1462-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 89: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 7:04 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.

January 31, 1990

As rumors of new disarmament proposals from Gorbachev begin circulating in January 1990, President Bush takes Scowcroft's advice to heart and pushes a new proposal to significantly reduce levels of conventional troops in Europe—down to 195,000 (from the presently negotiated 275,000). The rationale is to “get ahead of Gorbachev” and to preempt Congress, where “some weirdos [...] who have all sorts of crazy ideas”⁶⁶ about significantly cutting the U.S. presence in Europe could undermine the president's policy to maintain substantial American force levels there. Bush wanted to announce the new initiative in his State of the Union address on January 31, which required persuading the allies and Gorbachev. Bush and Scowcroft decided to send the Eagleburger-Gates team to Europe while Bush would call the key leaders himself. On January 26 he contacted Kohl and shared his concerns about the “optics” involved. “I am persuaded that the best way to make these manpower reductions and to sustain the new force levels,” Bush said, “is within the arms control negotiating process, keeping the U.S. in Central Europe and NATO strong.”⁶⁷ During discussions at the NSC, Bush wanted to break away from the principle of “symmetry” of forces and to define the number specifically for Central Europe, which would “put the Soviets at 195,000 and us at 225,000.”⁶⁸ After all the allies were on board, and literally hours before the State of the Union, Bush finally called Gorbachev and informed him of the proposal he was about to announce. Not given any time for reflection and analysis, Gorbachev reacted positively, just as Bush hoped he would. However, this new position, which Gorbachev never discussed with the Soviet military, along with the underlying unequal numbers, became one more irritant for the General Staff and made the CFE Treaty more problematic for the Soviet Union when the Warsaw Pact later dissolved.

The President: Good morning.

Chairman Gorbachev: Good morning, Mr. President.

The President: I want to thank you for taking the call. I want to start by wishing you well. There have been wild rumors here in Washington and there are a lot of interesting events. Obviously, we cannot talk about everything on an open line but I am glad to have this chance to talk to you on an arms control matter.

Chairman Gorbachev: Good. I welcome your initiative. I understand that our possibilities on this open channel are limited—so greetings and I welcome the

⁶⁶ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 212.

⁶⁷ Bush-Kohl Memorandum of Conversation, January 26, 1990, Bush Presidential Library.

⁶⁸ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 211.

chance to talk to you. As for the rumors, there are many here my country and in yours too.

The President: That's for sure. Maybe it is just best if I go through my proposal and then we can talk about it.

Chairman Gorbachev: Good.

The President: At Malta, our two governments agreed to place a very high priority on the early conclusion of a CFE treaty. Our common aim remains to sign the treaty this year. I have been considering ways to accelerate progress at the Vienna talks, and Jim Baker will be prepared to discuss the full range of CFE issues with Mr. Shevardnadze, including some new ideas on the aircraft proposal.

The conclusion of this treaty is even more urgent today because of the hopeful and fast-moving events taking place in Eastern Europe. We need to do everything possible to make sure that the military situation reflects the new political realities. I have been examining with my advisors, and with U.S. allies, the question of the maximum number of troops that the United States and the Soviet side should have stationed on foreign territory in Europe when this CFE agreement has been fully implemented.

I have come to the conclusion that the 275,000 figure is too high for both your country and mine. I hope you agree that we should set a new lower manpower ceiling for the treaty.

My proposal is that we agree to drop the 275,000 figure for the U.S. and Soviet stationed forces and revise the current position on manpower in CFE to set a new ceiling for those forces at 195,000 in the Central Zone of Europe. 195,000 in the Central Zone of Europe is the proposal I will make.

Tonight I will announce this proposal to the American people in a speech on the State of the Union. If the proposal is acceptable it will be a clear signal that the CFE negotiations in which we are now engaged can keep pace with the political events that are changing the continent.

We have had consultations with our key allies and there is general agreement that this is a good, sound proposal. We intend to keep a substantial military presence in Europe for the foreseeable future—that is an Alliance decision—and it would hold regardless of the decisions you take about your own forces. I hope you recognize that the U.S. presence makes a helpful and important contribution to European stability.

But for today, the issue is how to treat U.S. and Soviet manpower in this agreement and I believe this proposal is fair. It doesn't push either side too fast but it shows a readiness to change.

The main thing is we want to conclude the CFE agreement. I do not want this new proposal to delay our CFE negotiations in any way. But my experts think it is possible to accommodate this change and have an agreement that is a little more in line with current conditions.

I will push our side and I hope you will push your side. It is a major priority of my Administration to conclude this treaty by the time we meet in June.

I know this is sudden but I wanted to give you the courtesy of telling you before my speech tonight. If you want to react now that's fine or if you want to wait until you have had time to talk with your people.

Well. Over to you.

Chairman Gorbachev: Thank you for letting me know what you will tell Congress. Let me react to two or three points.

First of all, we share your approach to the talks in the context of the changes now happening in the world and I agree that the Vienna talks—the pace and content of the Vienna talks—must keep pace with new realities.

And I fully agree that we must push forward the process to live up to the hopes of the peoples of Europe.

The President: Yes.

Chairman Gorbachev: I believe that under no circumstances should we abandon or slow down the process. We need to work to find mutually acceptable solutions.

As I understand it—your proposal envisions a new and lower ceiling. You have emphasized that the U.S. will maintain its military presence in Europe after the negotiations are completed. If I understand you, this is regardless of what the Soviet Union does.

The President: Yes.

Chairman Gorbachev: We'll give it thought. But let me say that we will need to talk about the Central Zone of Europe and other zones. We'll need to talk not just about U.S. and Soviet forces but other forces. Baker and Shevardnadze will have a lot to do. You and I will need to talk too. You can expect our cooperation—our constructive cooperation.

And you can be assured that my response means that I am happy that we are keeping in touch to look at the most important problems today. I fully expect you will get more detailed answers from me or when Baker is in Moscow.

Let me say that I share the spirit of your approach—we must act consistently with changes in Europe.

The President: This call is interesting for me. As you were talking I was thinking that I wish we could talk more often without a fixed agenda because there are so many problems and changes to address. I just hope we can find ways to talk more often. Baker will talk with Shevardnadze and he has our full confidence and that is a useful channel. But I wish we could talk more often. I appreciate the spirit of this phone call and I wish you well.

Chairman Gorbachev: Mr. President, I fully agree. I do believe that both of us feel the need for personal contact and work is underway to get a secure communications link for us that will allow us to talk more freely.

Today the President of Brazil gave me a verbal message from you. Well, I want to thank you and I value these gestures from the President of the United States.

Let me thank you—you are just beginning your working day and I wish you a good day. Raisa and I send our best to you and Barbara

The President: I want to say one more thing in substance. We have wrestled with the proper number in discussions here and with our allies. You'll have your own ideas on that but let me say that the number was achieved after consultations with the Allies and with the military here. This number was not pulled out of the hat. We are, therefore, attached to the number.

Chairman Gorbachev: Mr. President, I take note of this and assure you that we will look at it carefully and seriously.

The President: I did have a good talk with the Brazilian President and I'm glad he remembered me to you. My best to Raisa.

Chairman Gorbachev: Goodbye (in English).

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA request 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 90: Memorandum of Conversation,
Gates–Kryuchkov, KGB Headquarters,
Moscow, 3:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

February 9, 1990

This extraordinary meeting between career senior CIA officer Robert Gates—now the U.S. deputy national security adviser—and head of the Soviet KGB Vladimir Kryuchkov took place in the office of the late Yuri Andropov at the infamous Lubyanka in Moscow. Gates arrived directly from a session between Gorbachev and Baker that would go on for more than three hours.⁶⁹ Kryuchkov, who was appointed by Gorbachev to replace Chebrikov in October 1988, comes across as surprisingly progressive on many issues of domestic reform. He talks openly about the shortcomings and problems of perestroika, the need to abolish the leading role of the CPSU, the central government's mistaken neglect of ethnic issues, the "atrocious" pricing system, and other domestic topics. The discussion moves on to foreign policy, in particular the German question. At the end of the meeting, Kryuchkov hands Gates a list of names of drug traffickers in Europe who are members of the Afghan opposition that is supported by the United States; he also criticizes the U.S. invasion of Panama.

A year-and-a-half later, the two would become de facto adversaries again. In August 1991, Kryuchkov emerged as a leader of the coup attempt against Gorbachev. Gates, meanwhile, had become Bush's nominee to direct the CIA, formally assuming his post in November. In his memoir, Gates described the February 1990 meeting as "formal and stiff," and Kryuchkov as open about his "change of heart"—openly opposing Gorbachev in front of a senior American official.⁷⁰ The transcript below does not mention any such shifts of allegiance or opinion. Either the record has been altered or the August coup affected Gates' memory and interpretation of the discussion.

Kryuchkov received Gates in his office in the New KGB Building. After exchanging greetings, Gates informed Kryuchkov that he had just left the meeting between Gorbachev and Secretary Baker, which was still underway after more than three hours. Gates said that Gorbachev had been explaining what had taken place during the just concluded Central Committee plenum, joking that the latter had been so eventful that it would take all day for Gorbachev to finish. [...]

Kryuchkov said "of course, perestroika is encountering problems," and that had been reflected in the debates at the plenum. We should have planned for the changes to take place over a longer period of time, he said, because the hardest

⁶⁹ See Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History*, Document No. 119, pp. 675–684.

⁷⁰ Gates, *From the Shadows*, p. 491.

thing of all to change is the way people think. It takes time, especially to bring about substantial changes. We had hoped to bring about large-scale change quickly, but it was more than our people could take. Change should be applied gradually, like oxygen. Too much too quickly could make one dizzy. Nevertheless, he continued, there is no way back now. We must push ahead. We will make adjustments as we go, making sure we remain in touch with the people, checking their views and attitudes. We had to do this so the leadership would not go one way, the people the other.

Kryuchkov argued that Article Six of the constitution, which gave the party the leading role in the society, need not be “eternal.” It had been inserted in the new constitution in 1977, but no longer corresponded to reality. It should be either changed or omitted entirely. Doing so would present no big problem. Its presence had spoiled the party. Party decisions were too easily turned into law. The party was not then or now equivalent to society as a whole, and neither was the Central Committee. Since the article no longer corresponded to reality, if it remained in force it could cause philosophical and practical problems.

As for establishment of a multi-party system, he said, many informal organizations already exist which function like parties. Nevertheless, a multi-party structure should be introduced gradually. Standards and regulations should be established concerning registration, minimum requirements for membership, etc. A monarchist “party” now exists which wants to restore a monarchy. That obviously is not in keeping with the times, and such a party is out of place. Nevertheless, all such groups have a right to exist. There are some quite extreme groupings—anarchists, for example. Formal requirements should be put into place governing their activity. They are not, he continued, like companies. The U.S. had many companies—15 to 18 million, he understood, some of which lasted only a few days, some for decades. But parties should not be such temporary phenomena. [...]

For many years we should have been paying more attention to interethnic disputes. But we had this idea that everything was developing without a problem. We were wrong. In regard to Eastern Europe, we should let things take their own course, give them a chance to develop normally. But of course we could not “forget the results and costs of the war.” Kryuchkov noted that that had been a brief outline of his thinking and his presentation. He assumed that U.S. analysts would take a closer look at the latter and the results of the plenum. [...]

Gates said he would like to outline briefly for Kryuchkov three general problems he sees the USSR facing now. The first concerns interethnic relations. Gorbachev had inherited the problems of an Empire in this regard. Many of the regions that now made up the USSR had not joined the Empire voluntarily, but by force of arms. Many now want independence, and want it quickly. The time needed to work out a form of voluntary federation thus might not be available.

Second, political developments are outrunning economic developments in the society. And the problem is that many of these economic problems need to be tackled at the same time. Moreover, many of these changes are such that they

require painful adjustments by the people. Thus, this process of change is indeed difficult.

Third, reform is weakening the old institutions before new institutions can be put in place. The society's ability to implement necessary change is thereby also weakened.

Gates said one thing is difficult to understand, however. What has caused the recent, sharp increase in crime, especially large-scale, organized crime? There have even been reports of hijacking of trains.

Kryuchkov said that Gates' observations deserve serious study. But they represent a view from the outside. And for all of us, our analysis is supplemented by our emotional reactions. History has it uses. Gates is correct when he says that not all of the regions had incorporated themselves voluntarily. There are perhaps no parallels easily drawn between the U.S. and the USSR, but the Civil War in the U.S. indicated that not all of the fifty states had agreed to their incorporation either. History was history, but it could not by itself be allowed to be a determining factor. History could not be ignored, but "if it is put up front, it just complicates our life." New factors always arose.

In the case of the USSR, over the past seventy years, growing interdependence among the republics had increasingly tied them together, especially economically. The Baltic states, for example, got more from the rest of the Soviet Union than they gave. Estonia got cotton, oil, energy, grain, forage, non-ferrous metals, and so on. Of course it also contributed to the rest of the USSR, but not as much. The most dependent of all of the republics was Lithuania, which was paradoxical, for it is exactly there that the drive for independence is most developed. But the interdependence of all of the republics is now very strong. It had developed because of an intentional policy, the result of a conscious effort by the center to develop the outer periphery of the country. No republic can leave tomorrow without feeling this interconnection. Interdependence painfully affects the Union. Armenia now wants to shut down a plant that is polluting the area. But the plant produces something on which seven hundred fifty other plants depend.

Nevertheless, there is much in what Gates had to say. Much effort has to be devoted toward developing a new federation as soon as possible. Some areas want political independence, with continuing economic interdependence. Even that possibility cannot be rejected out of hand.

Concerning shortages in goods, Kryuchkov said, we in fact have increased the number of goods considerably in the past five years. The problem is the enormous increase of money in people's hands, plus our "atrocious" pricing system. Wage and pension increases have contributed to the problem of the ruble overhang, but the main culprit is conversion of very large amounts of what in the past had been non-liquid funds—columns of figures in accounting books—to cash. In the old days if an enterprise had 50 million rubles, 40 million would have been non-liquid. Under the new system much more of it was available in cash. So now we have hundreds of billions of rubles of "bad money"—money not backed up by goods—circulating in the system. [...]

Gates asked how Kryuchkov personally viewed prospects for reestablishing order, putting the economy on the right track, and resolving the interethnic problems. Is he a pessimist or an optimist?

Kryuchkov replied that the German philosopher Berghoff had discussed the problem of pessimism and optimism in a treatise. He had concluded that a pessimist lost nothing, for if he was wrong, he simply shrugged his shoulders and no one paid attention to him. An optimist, however, staked everything on his bet, and stood to lose it all. Nevertheless, Kryuchkov continued, I am an optimist. We have no choice but to change the system, because other kinds of change in the USSR and around its borders make change in the system inevitable. It was unfortunate that some of this change had come about only after loss of life. But we should strengthen our laws to avoid such loss. And we had to continue with politicization of the people to create the need for enterprise among the people, and to transfer power to individual enterprises and local councils in order to develop responsibility at those levels. With increasing frequency this was now happening. In a number of areas around the country local citizenry or local party members have risen up against inefficient or corrupt party organs and booted the rascals out. That is encouraging, and a sign that what we want to happen is happening. [...]

Gates asked if the Soviet Union would permit private property—the large scale ownership of land and equity. Would peasants be able to pass land on to their children?

Kryuchkov said that cooperative land-holding is now possible, and groups of 15–20 people in essence control the land they farmed. But we wish to protect our people from exploitation in the Marxist sense, when people could enrich themselves purely from the labor of others. Your political systems in the West are more sophisticated. In most countries there are two parties, liberal and conservative. After several years of moving toward the left under liberal democrats, the conservatives were voted in to provide the people a rest. A great system. Thatcher had now been in power for what—thirteen years? It was time for a change.

Kryuchkov said that the question of selling land is not yet decided. There are two points of view—one for, one opposed. Peasants could not be given the land free of charge. But if they were asked to pay for it they would reply that they should not pay for something they—“the people”—already owned. The new laws on land and on property would include provision for leases unlimited in time. But people would be reluctant to leave the *kolkhozes*, especially the more economically stable. In Eastern Europe they would not dissolve the *kolkhozes*, especially in Czechoslovakia and the GDR, where there was an ideal proportion of collective and individually-owned land.

Gates said he would like to pursue that issue further, but knew that Kryuchkov was busy, and would like to move on to two other subjects. First, the German question. Events are moving faster than anticipated. We might see some GDR initiative after the 18 March elections. Under these circumstances, we support the Kohl-Genscher idea of a united Germany belonging to NATO but with no expansion of military presence to the GDR. This would be in the context of continuing

force reductions in Europe. What did Kryuchkov think of the Kohl/Genscher proposal under which a united Germany would be associated with NATO, but in which NATO troops would move no further east than they now were? It seems to us to be a sound proposal. There are in any case only three options for a unified Germany: either it would be a member of NATO, neutral, or a member of the Warsaw Pact.

Gates said that alignment with the Warsaw Pact clearly was not possible in terms of present realities. A neutral Germany would suffer from the same insecurities and uncertainties regarding its security that Germany had experienced before World War I. In an effort to assure its security it would be tempted to develop nuclear weapons and turn in different directions, seeking reassurance. A large, economically powerful Germany just could not be neutral. The third option, membership in NATO, would provide for a secure Germany integrated in Western Europe which the Soviet Union would have no reason to fear. It would anchor Germany in a way that would leave it secure, able to exercise a positive economic influence (including in the East), and without being a security problem for the USSR.

Kryuchkov replied that as Gates should know, the events in the GDR concern the Soviet people. The other countries are different. But the USSR had paid a terrible price in World War II—20 million killed. “We can’t exclude that a reborn, united Germany might become a threat to Europe. We would hate to see the US and USSR have to become allies again against a resurgent Germany.”

“Germany’s technical possibilities and intellectual potential are well known. It is difficult to predict what directions its military and technology might take.” That is no idle question, for “influential forces in the FRG do not wish to recognize the results of the War or to accept the post-World War II borders.” The Poles are also concerned. We never said that Germany could never reunite—but the basis on which reunification took place was always important to us. Trust between the US and USSR is growing, true, but that trust still had to be “materialized.” The Soviet Union, under present circumstances, could have “no enthusiasm” about a united Germany in NATO. We should look for other options. You, Great Britain, and France would develop a common view, and we in the Warsaw Pact would do so, and we would discuss them. We need not hurry so much. Kohl and Genscher had interesting ideas—but even those points in their proposals with which we agree would have to have guarantees. We learned from the Americans in arms control negotiations the importance of verification, and we would have to be sure.

The U.S. had to participate in World War II even though it had been protected by oceans. Now the oceans were meaningless. An interdependent world would not allow any great power to escape involvement in a new war. “People here say that we have had peace for forty-five years because Germany is divided.” And of course Japan did not become a military superpower. But the question of German unity is a very serious one, and requires far-reaching, frank exchanges of opinions between the US and USSR.

Gates said he had two points to make on professional matters.

First, Kryuchkov would have noted that Vladimir Apinidze had returned to the USSR, without any publicity. Kryuchkov nodded assent.

Second, could Kryuchkov frankly state what had happened to Major General Dimitry Polyakov (“Donald”)? Kryuchkov replied that he had been shot in 1988. He added that Polyakov had “told all.” “We know everything, and you know everything.”

Gates said that Kryuchkov occupied an especially responsible position at this time of momentous happenings. It was very important that our foreign ministers and heads of state met to discuss matters of mutual concern. It was also important that he and Kryuchkov be able to discuss matters in this channel. Gates said that if ever Kryuchkov believed that a special meeting was necessary, that could be arranged through existing channels. We preferred not to use the intelligence channel for political issues. And, of course, we should not meet without the knowledge of our foreign ministers. Kryuchkov nodded assent.

Kryuchkov thanked Gates for his observations, which were useful, whether or not one necessarily agreed with them all. Though he was an optimist, he continued, that does not mean that he is not aware of the many problems the country faced. There is a struggle underway between those who want change and those who do not. Each side might have to make concessions. “A political climate is being formed in which on occasion certain actions might have to be taken. The external reaction would be important. It would be one thing to understand our actions, perhaps even to support us. It would be another to attempt to take advantage of our problems.” We heard nice words from you, but if there were no corresponding action—for example, development of good trade relations—your intentions would be interpreted differently. We are not asking for material assistance, “for anything free.” Our resources are such that we do not need that. Our increasing contacts with the U.S. had helped us increasingly to understand the U.S. and its foreign policy, though we could not approve of Panama, where you invaded a small country in order to try one possible criminal. Noriega may be a very evil fellow, but that was too much. On the other hand, we understand and support your struggle against narcotics trafficking.

Kryuchkov then handed Gates a list of names prepared by the KGB which he said were persons engaged in drug running operations in Europe and the U.S. They happened to be members of the Afghan opposition. He added with a smile that it was a rare opportunity in which he could kill two birds with one stone—promote the struggle against drugs and show the U.S. the true face of its alleged friends. He asked that Gates not reveal the source of this information. How Gates used it was of course up to him. If the U.S. did nothing more than end that supply channel that would be enough.

Gates said he would quickly respond to four points Kryuchkov had made. First, he noted that twice in the discussion Kryuchkov had made reference to the possibility that the U.S. would be tempted to take advantage of Soviet domestic troubles for its own ends. He said he wished to repeat with all seriousness that

the President did not want to cause problems for Gorbachev or perestroika. He supports perestroika as something very much in our mutual interest. Gates added with a smile that sometimes he thought Gorbachev regarded him as a “bad influence” in Washington. Gates continued that that was not the case. He supported the President’s view on perestroika fully.

Second, as the President had made clear in Malta, we are prepared to move ahead in some areas of trade. He recalled the Presidents’ comments on MFN, the Stevenson amendment and a new Trade Agreement.

Third, he also wanted to emphasize that the U.S. was aware of Soviet security concerns about a reunified Germany, and understood that they must be treated seriously.

Fourth, on Panama, the U.S. had Treaty arrangements authorizing our presence and that, in violation of those rights, Americans had been harassed and even killed. We had intervened to protect our citizens, our Treaty rights, and to remove an indicted drug dealer who had thwarted a free election. The Panamanians received us as liberators. Our troops would be out by the end of February. [...]

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0841-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 91: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Kohl, Camp David, 2:37 p.m. – 4:50 p.m.

February 24, 1990

This is an exceptionally important meeting, where the final deal on German unification on Western terms is being worked out. As the transcript shows, Kohl plays a pivotal role in the process. The West German chancellor arrives at Camp David without Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher because the latter does not fully share the Bush-Kohl position on full German membership in NATO, and he recently angered both leaders by speaking publicly about the CSCE as the future European security mechanism. At the beginning of the conversation, Kohl expresses gratitude for Bush and Baker's support during his meetings with Gorbachev in Moscow in early February, especially for Bush's letter stating Washington's strong commitment to German unification in NATO. Both leaders express the need for the closest cooperation between them in order to reach the desired outcome. Bush's priority is to keep the U.S. presence, especially the nuclear umbrella, in Europe: "if U.S. nuclear forces are withdrawn from Germany, I don't see how we can persuade any other ally on the continent to retain these weapons." He refers sarcastically to criticisms coming from Capitol Hill: "we have weird thinking in our Congress today, ideas like this peace dividend. We cannot do that in these uncertain times." Both leaders are concerned about the position Gorbachev might take and agree on the need to consult with him regularly. Kohl suggests that the Soviets need assistance and the final arrangement on Germany could be a "question of money." Foreshadowing his reluctance to contribute financially, Bush replies, "you have deep pockets." In this conversation, Bush does not treat his Soviet counterpart as a partner, but as a defeated enemy. Referring to the Soviet position against Germany in NATO, he says: "To hell with that. We prevailed and they didn't. We cannot let the Soviets snatch victory from the jaws of defeat."

Chancellor Kohl: I have a couple of items I'd like to discuss with you. First, I want to thank you for inviting me here. Second, I want to thank you for all your signs of friendship since you became President. The letter you wrote to me before I went to Moscow will go down in history as an important document in the history of US-German relations. And we will not forget what Secretary Baker did for me in Moscow, briefing me on his talks with Gorbachev before I saw him. It was decisive. German-American friendship is stronger now than it has ever been in the postwar period. It is vital. This is not just true in a military sense. [...]

Now, turning to the subject of German unity, the developments are so dramatic I can hardly believe it. Communism in the German Democratic Republic has collapsed like a house of cards. It looked like a giant, but it was hollow. We now are trying to stabilize the situation so one does have time to search for reasoned approaches. My ten-point program of last November has been swept away.

The psychological situation in the GDR was OK until Christmas, but the Modrow government collapsed in January. Let me give you two examples. Thousands of people are running away every day, and Modrow doesn't know how to create confidence. 350,000 people came to the FRG, and 200,000 of them are less than 30 years old. Their numbers included dentists, physicists, engineers, and skilled workers. Between January 1 and today, an entire city's worth of people left the GDR. In seven weeks, the total has been over 100,000. We must find a way to persuade people to stay. Productivity in the East is in sharp decline. Everyone wants to be paid in Deutsche Marks. Shortages are increasing. The corruption trials of the former GDR officials are having disastrous consequences. Of the 15 most important officials in the GDR a year ago, 10 are in prison. That used to be the leadership of the GDR. In the rest of the country, the corruption is just as bad. [...]

Chancellor Kohl: [...] Germany doesn't want neutrality in any way. This would be a deadly decision. There is no serious interest in it. A united Germany will be a member of NATO. One needs a precise definition for Germany's NATO membership, however. We will also need a transition period. NATO units, including Bundeswehr forces dedicated to NATO, cannot be stationed on East German soil.

It wouldn't work to have the Soviet group of forces in East Germany remain there indefinitely because it would compromise German sovereignty. And we have to decide what we will do about the East German New People's Army, with its 200,000 soldiers. And if West Germany is a member of NATO, should it be done in the way we are handling France? What about German military integration of the new Germany? Is this a good idea? But we do not want any special status for all of Germany, as occurred after 1918. That is why NATO is so important.

Concerning nuclear cooperation, we must think about what will happen with nuclear artillery, *Lance*, and the Follow-On-To-Lance (FOTL). What will your Congress say about FOTL? And how will these weapons be seen in Eastern Europe? But we must remain in NATO, and US forces must remain in Europe.

The President: I would like to make a few general comments.

We are going to stay involved in Europe. We have some pressure here to lower the level of US troops and defense spending. We are being asked: who is the enemy? The enemy is unpredictability, apathy, and destabilization. But we will stay in Europe. It will be a tough fight. As for FOTL, FOTL is dead as a doornail.

Chancellor Kohl: We will be getting into a nuclear discussion well before 1992. It will be an election issue this year. On the *Lance* business, I want to avoid the impression that the US caved in to public opinion in Europe.

The President: Congress is very unlikely to fund the FOTL program.

The concept of Germany being in NATO is absolutely crucial. I hate to think of another France in NATO. We need full participation for Germany in NATO. It will be stabilizing for Europe. We will continue to keep US troops in Germany and in Europe despite the pressure.

I'm concerned when I hear the Polish Prime Minister talk about keeping Soviet troops in Eastern Europe. I'm not enthralled when I hear Poland might want the Soviets to stay because of the issue of the Polish-German border. I don't like that, and I don't want to accept that.

We want to play a key role with you in all of this. You know and I know your European neighbors are nervous about this. Sometimes I forget to consult. But you and I must take care to consult with our smaller NATO partners.

Chancellor Kohl: Yes.

The President: Genscher made this statement to the Italians in Ottawa, that: "You're not in the game." This offended Italy, and some of the other guys. I will try to be sensitive to their concerns. Genscher must be sensitive too. I'm not suggesting that you haven't been.

Chancellor Kohl: I totally agree. I wasn't in Ottawa, but I had to take some of the consequences of Genscher's act. And I didn't like it. It was totally unnecessary. It's not my style either. There are domestic political reasons for this. Genscher is having trouble with his party.

Everyone is confused but me. I'm doing OK, but the other parties are in disarray, including the FDP. As for the Ottawa matter, I realize, of course, that I have to do a master resuscitation with Andreotti and the others.

I'll do the same thing with Francois Mitterrand at some time. He has been holding firm. Most of the French people are on our side, but the political class is against us. But we have to keep working the problem. Copenhagen, and Norway, are also hard cases. The Netherlands and the UK are also problems. Margaret Thatcher: I can't do anything about her. I can't understand her. The Empire declined fighting Germany—she thinks the UK paid this enormous price, and here comes Germany again.

The President: We don't look at it that way. We don't fear the ghosts of the past; Margaret does. But you and we must bend over backwards to consult, recognizing our unique role in history. I called Margaret today just to listen to her, which I did for an hour.

Chancellor Kohl: In the FRG there is anger among Germans because we have been reliable partners for over 40 years. Why doesn't that help? Logic doesn't help.

The President: The United States can and will help. When you say Germany will be staying [in] NATO with full membership, that helps. Margaret told me today that everyone expects German unity (although six months ago she felt differently). But she said everyone is worried about the uncertainties. Germany being fully involved in NATO helps.

We don't support the idea of Polish reparations. On the Polish border, it has cycled over here as an issue. I know you have political problems, but the more you can do on this the better it will be.

We feel that US nuclear weapons are an essential part of the US military presence in Germany. If US nuclear forces are withdrawn from Germany, I don't see how we can persuade any other ally on the continent to retain these weapons.

Because there is uncertainty, we need a nuclear presence in Germany. Our public sees the nuclear deterrent as the protection for our boys. I worry that if we lose nuclear weapons, domestic support for US troops would erode.

On the Two Plus Four, we don't want the Soviets to use this mechanism as an instrument to force you to create the Germany they might want. I am concerned that the Two Plus Four not get in the way of your dialogue with the GDR on the nature of unification. I worry that too early an engagement in Two Plus Four talks will stimulate the Soviets to interfere.

I told Margaret that the Two Plus Four should focus on giving up Four Power rights and responsibilities for Germany as a whole and for Berlin. I would hate to see the Two Plus Four get involved in the issue of Germany's full membership in NATO.

Chancellor Kohl: Gorbachev will have his views on NATO.

Secretary Baker: I believe Gorbachev and Shevardnadze believe US forces are a stabilizing presence. The Soviets haven't yet decided on their final position on Germany and NATO.

The President: Full German membership is linked to our ability to sustain US troops in Europe. You must understand that.

Chancellor Kohl: I like that very much. I want America in Europe, and not only its military presence. I want to eradicate the concept of a Fortress Europe. Hundreds of steps are required, but we must make Fortress Europe an impossibility.

Secretary Baker: NATO is the *raison d'être* for keeping US forces in Europe. If the Soviets want the US in Europe, they have to accept NATO. We couldn't have US forces in Europe on the soil of a non-full member of NATO.

Chancellor Kohl: The Soviets are negotiating. But this may end up as a matter of cash. They need money.

The President: On US-Soviet relations, we want to see Gorbachev succeed. We want a successful US-Soviet Summit which will give him a boost at home. We want a CFE agreement signed. A CSCE Summit. A START accord this year.

Having said that, the Soviets are not in a position to dictate Germany's relationship with NATO. What worries me is talk that Germany must not stay in NATO. To hell with that. We prevailed and they didn't. We can't let the Soviets clutch victory from the jaws of defeat.

We have weird thinking in our Congress today, ideas like this peace dividend. We can't do that in these uncertain times. We can't let the Polish Prime Minister dictate how many Soviets stay. We have to stay together and work things out.

Chancellor Kohl: The Soviets could stay in Germany for a limited time if that could be a solution, if the time is limited. But it must not be for an extended period.

The President: Just so we don't say: All the Soviets must leave, so all the US troops must leave Germany too.

Chancellor Kohl: No. As I said, there is a difference between being 6000 kilometers away and being 600 kilometers away. It is a ten-to-one difference. You must stay even if the Soviets leave Germany.

The President: On a CSCE Summit, I have agreed to participate in a CSCE Summit this year, if we can complete a CFE treaty that can be signed at the meeting. The Summit should review how we are doing in the three CSCE baskets. I hope that the Summit will endorse new CSCE guidelines for the conduct of free elections, to help us protect the emergence of real democracy in Eastern Europe.

While this CSCE Summit may acknowledge, in some way, the activities of the Two Plus Four, we do not want the CSCE Summit to be centered on Germany, or to be a meeting which tries to undermine Germany's full membership in NATO.

Finally, we need to try to strengthen the CSCE process. But I'm sure you agree with me that the CSCE cannot replace NATO as the core of the West's deterrent strategy in Europe and as the fundamental justification for U.S. troops in Europe. If that happens, we will have a real problem.

Chancellor Kohl: I don't want the CSCE Summit to be a forum for discussion of the German problem. But Gorbachev needs a CSCE Summit. And you will make lots of progress in arms control at a US-Soviet Summit. You can work on progress in the three baskets.

Secretary Baker: What else should we discuss? How about procedural next steps on the Two Plus Four process?

The President: And domestic politics in Germany. We support you because of your principles, and because we have a big stake in this. We feel comfortable with you at the wheel.

Chancellor Kohl: We will stick to two tracks: a domestic German track and an international track. It is important that you continue US-Soviet disarmament, so that no one can say the German issue is slowing progress in arms control. I will push EC integration with all my weight. There will be a special EC Summit on the last Saturday in April. We need as many consultations as possible. We need to talk frankly with the Soviets. It would be good for the US to talk to the Soviets outside of the Two Plus Four about German membership in NATO. That way the Soviets will understand that there is total US-FRG agreement without any games. The Soviets may be more willing to tell you their real price tag for their agreement.

Secretary Baker: It is important that we send strong public signals about continued full German membership in NATO.

Chancellor Kohl: Of course. We are in complete agreement. There will be concerns for the Soviets if Germany remains in NATO, for their security. And they will want to get something in return.

The President: You've got deep pockets.

Chancellor Kohl: Now, as to the Two Plus Four, we have to work very closely together. After the elections, we will keep you informed about developments with the two Germanys. The Soviets will be likely to influence the new GDR government. We must coordinate every step, along with the UK and France.

On domestic developments, the mood of people in the FRG is in favor of unification, but they are afraid of the sacrifices required. These won't be major sacrifices in a historical sense, but people are worrying. We now pay 22 billion DM to subsidize Berlin, and 30 billion DM in tax privileges for Berlin per year. These

costs will disappear. If I add up the balance sheet after 10 years, then we will be making money.

Now, on the political situation in the GDR. Someone who lives in Leipzig has to be 79 years old to have participated in free elections before. They would have been 21 years old in November 1932. That says all there is to say. In East Berlin, 32,000 people are employed in State Security. This has left an impact, has shaped the people. There is no middle class. There are no wealthy people. The social structure is warped. It will take some time. It is a peasant and worker state. All of a sudden a market economy will be introduced.

The first election won't be typical. It will take two or three elections before things take on a clearer shape. I want this March 18 election, then local elections in May, then the *Land* elections in the GDR, then a federal election in December, and then—next year—all-German elections. We had the same situation in 1946-49. If I can win this year in the FRG election, I can win next year in the all-German election. This will give me time. If I postpone elections, I would no longer be in charge.

The GDR's new government will have to make many unpleasant decisions, about inefficient industries, the consequences of introducing supply and demand, and on the environment. They will have to make these decisions. They will have to begin being real politicians.

Secretary Baker: There would be all-German elections in 1991.

Chancellor Kohl: If I have any influence...

Secretary Baker: What if the *laender* try to join the FRG under Article 23? Will that force you to move the elections up?

Chancellor Kohl: No. I want a graduated strategy from successful monetary union, to the federal elections in December 1990, to all-German elections in 1991. I want to involve GDR politicians in the future of a united Germany.

The SPD in the GDR is the strongest party. It is a region where that party has had long-time historical strength. This will stir up some emotion. Then, there are the so-called conservative parties—the former Liberals, the former Christian Democrats. People remember that they cooperated with the SED. After the first elections, time will be needed. Only two people are important in the GDR elections. Willy Brandt, who is 75 years old, and myself. I'll have six campaign appearances in the GDR. Hundreds of thousands of young people come to my rallies. But, whatever happens in the election, the new GDR government will have to face its responsibilities. We will need time before all-German elections.

The President: What do your political opponents in the FRG say about your handling of German unification?

Chancellor Kohl: They criticize me for not putting enough money into the GDR. I'll do that after March 18. People will stay home only when they have cold cash in their hand. It's the same problem Gorbachev has.

The President: Do you think your German domestic political opponents will try to oppose full German membership in NATO, and US troops in Germany?

Chancellor Kohl: As far as NATO is concerned, everyone is in favor of full membership. Some in the SPD discuss German membership in NATO along

French lines. I don't think it will be a big issue. On US troops, there may be more varied opinions. Worse still, in the next two months, FOTL and nuclear artillery will be coming up in all the parties. The debate will intensify. The ranges of these missiles makes these systems politically untenable. There must be a decision made by the US, and not made under pressure. The Soviets would have to remove theirs too—that would be the US proposal.

Secretary Baker: We hope we will have a CFE agreement in June or September.

The President: What would you like us to do on FOTL? What would help you most?

Chancellor Kohl: For the US President, it is essential that he not give up under external pressure. The question is, of course, to try to involve the Soviets.

General Scowcroft: FOTL funding will be gone by May.

Chancellor Kohl: The initiative should be yours, not with Congress. Couldn't one raise this with the Soviets?

Secretary Baker: Maybe we could lump no modernization of *Lance* in with our position going into the SNF negotiations.

General Scowcroft: The Soviet systems are, by and large, already modernized.

Chancellor Kohl: There will be a debate in your Congress on this starting in four to six weeks, which will instantly give us a debate in Germany.

The President: We want a position that will help you, and not undermine the Alliance. The authority of the President is also important here.

General Scowcroft: There are two ways we can do it: (1) we can fight to keep the money in; or (2) we can let you announce the cancellation for your political benefit.

Secretary Baker: Last year's debate in the Alliance was about SNF negotiations. If we could fold FOTL into SNF negotiations, that might help with the Congress.

Chancellor Kohl: Nuclear artillery is also a part of the SNF issue. We must keep that in mind.

Secretary Baker: Maybe we can begin SNF negotiations this year, folding in FOTL.

Chancellor Kohl: My problem is with your debate in Congress.

Secretary Baker: There could be an announcement in the next 30 days that we will not fund FOTL in FY 91, as we wait to see what will happen in the SNF negotiations.

Chancellor Kohl: It would be good to make a decision soon. But if you said to Congress that you might ask for a modernized *Lance* next year if SNF negotiations fail, that would be worse for me than the present situation.

Mrs. Thatcher talks to me in a way I wouldn't accept from anyone else. She is isolating herself from her own countrymen. I once told her that I was post-Churchill, but she was pre-Churchill. [...]

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 92: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 7:14 a.m. – 7:51 a.m.

February 28, 1990

Bush calls Gorbachev to congratulate him on the successful presidential election in Nicaragua—the possibility of which the U.S. administration doubted until the last moment—but also to inform him about his conversations with Helmut Kohl at Camp David. Democratic elections in Nicaragua became a reality in part due to Soviet pressure on the Sandinistas to engage in the process of national reconciliation and in part thanks to the active engagement of the Contadora group of Central American countries under the leadership of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. On Germany, however, the Soviet leader is slow to engage, and is not ready for a specific dialogue about Soviet conditions for reunification. He does not see how the election momentum in Germany is outpacing his vision of a gradual European security process. Hearing about the Bush-Kohl meeting of minds on unification, the Soviet leader replies: “I must disappoint you—we do not yet have a common understanding with Chancellor Kohl.” He repeats several times that unification would have to happen in the context of the all-European process, having in mind his ultimate vision of the common European home, but he is not ready to go beyond general statements. Bush feels no need to press him because the momentum in Germany is on his side.

The President: Good morning. How are you?

President Gorbachev: Good morning. But it is good afternoon here already.

The President: I have been reading about your changes and the strengthening of the Presidency. It is all over our newspapers this morning.

President Gorbachev: Yes, Mr. President, yesterday was a long and difficult day. I am sorry that I could not take your call when you wanted.

The President: That is alright. I fully understand and this was not an urgent matter. I wanted to talk with you about Nicaragua and to fill you in on my conversation with Chancellor Kohl this past weekend.

President Gorbachev: I will listen with pleasure to your comments but first, are you well?

The President: Very. I am going to the West Coast today. Barbara and I are both well. The weather is miserable and cold in Washington. But we are fine.

President Gorbachev: I am pleased to hear that. I wish you and Barbara the best.

The President: The same to you and your family. Now, may I read through a few talking points and then we can discuss anything you would like.

President Gorbachev: I am listening.

The President: The elections in Nicaragua were free and fair and this was a victory for democracy and the Nicaraguan people. This election was received

well by the Venezuelan, Costa Rican and Mexican Presidents as well as other democratic leaders.

I want to thank you and the Soviet leadership for your role in bringing about the free and fair elections. I noted the forward-leaning statement that came out of the Soviet Union, not only recognizing the results of the elections but offering to help.

The initial statements of reconciliation and congratulations from Daniel Ortega were encouraging but now there are troubling signs that he will not give up the army and the police—the Ministry of Interior.

I think Perez and other leaders will impress on him the need to transfer power. I hope you will use your influence too. We will use whatever influence we have with the Contras that they lay down their weapons. The fighting should be over now. My plea is that we work together with the countries of the region to bring about the peaceful establishment of the government. If we could do that it would send a wonderful signal to the rest of the non-Latin world that we can work together.

Now I intend to make a couple of comments on the Kohl visit but if you have comments on Nicaragua—What do you want?

President Gorbachev: Let me respond. We in the Soviet Union proceeded from the assumption that the Nicaraguans should take care of their internal problems. Therefore, we supported the electoral process. We in no way interfered with that process and we are maintaining normal relations. At this stage you can assume that we will not interfere in their internal affairs. We want the Nicaraguans to solve their own problems based on political methods. That has been our policy and it will continue. If there is a need on any point for the two of us to consult, we can be in touch on this.

I can say that it is only from you that I have heard of this unpleasantness. Maybe that is because I have been so busy. We have not been approached by either side, at least I don't know of any approach. I will look into this matter after this call.

The President: I am just referring to some statements that came out yesterday and maybe its Ortega trying to control his extremist elements. But there was an explicit statement about the army and the police. If you can influence them quietly. I have no specific appeal to you today, these were just general comments.

President Gorbachev: Alright.

The President: On the Kohl visit—we feel it was helpful. We agree with Kohl that German unity is a positive development. We expressed our common goal of building a democratic and united Germany which—in firm alliance with its long-standing allies and as a part of an increasingly integrated Europe—will be one of the pillars of stability and peace in Europe for the long term.

The Chancellor and I agreed that the unified Germany should remain in NATO; that American troops will remain in Europe as long as the Europeans want them; and that there needs to be a special status for the former territory of the GDR.

There seems to be increasing concern in West and East about what might result from a united Germany but it is our view that the unification of Germany should not abridge the legitimate security interests of any state in Europe. The FRG is ready to work with its neighbors, the Soviet Union and its allies to promote peace and stability in a rapidly changing Europe.

Chancellor Kohl and I had long talks about this and I am sure that it is true. I am sure you know this but we did discuss the Soviet Union's role. Your personal role in respecting changes in Eastern Europe has been crucial. That led Kohl to encourage me to have as much contact with you and to move forward on the arms control front. I told Kohl that you wanted to move forward in arms control too and that we would.

One last point. Thank you personally for your generosity with your time when Jim Baker was in Moscow. Thank you for that.

President Gorbachev: Very well, Mr. President. To this second part of your remarks let me say that we share the point of departure. This means that we agree that there should be common security as the result of the events in Europe and those connected with the unification of Germany. I believe that both of us understand that we regard this in the context of the postwar, all-European process. In this context, not everything is clear in the position of Chancellor Kohl. This provokes concern with many Europeans including with us. Even in the FRG itself it is being mentioned that Kohl has not spoken in recognition of the post-war borders. I had to mention this in my interview in *Pravda*. This point requires clarity.

Another element is the future of a united Germany in the context of common European security. Given the fact that European security is important to world security this is a key matter. You have said that you have a mutual understanding with Kohl. I must disappoint you—we do not yet have a common understanding with Chancellor Kohl. You have said that no one should be concerned about these changes and about the threat of a united Germany. But then if that is so, if you believe a united Germany would not be a threat—Why do Western countries want to incorporate them into one alliance? If we find that this would negatively effect [sic] the Soviet Union, we would have to think long and hard about it.

And after these remarks, I want to invite you to continue to consult with me and with Chancellor Kohl and I will do the same.

Mr. President, I hope you will regard with understanding our special situation in this. I hope we will find mutual understanding and a solution to this common problem. And of course I am pleased with Secretary Baker's impressions of our session in Moscow and also with the work we were able to do. It shows how much progress we can make when we work together. Mr. President my remarks were a little long but the points you made were more important.

Thank you for taking the initiative of this phone call. That is twice and I am in debt. I will have to draw some conclusions from this. I am sending my regards—I hope we can continue our cooperation and dialogue.

The President: I appreciate your comments. Some day we'll have a better line to talk more frankly. Let me assure you that the reservations you have

raised—are not just reservations of the USSR—there are concerns throughout Western Europe. I hope you will have no reservations about speaking frankly.

I wanted you to know that even with our history of loss of life ourselves, we believe a united Germany need not be an aggressive force or threat. Finally in response to your question of why we want Germany in the Western alliance—I must say to guard against uncertainty and instability.

President Gorbachev: To your last remark—We need to continue the dialogue and I hope we can use all means available to us. Eventually I hope we can weigh all factors and find the approach that can be consistent with the interests of our two countries, the united Germany and Europe as a whole.

The President: I agree. If it is agreeable to you, I want to say that we chatted on matters concerning the elections in Nicaragua and issues of Eastern Europe. You are free to say what you wish but it is better sometimes to be on the same wavelength.

President Gorbachev: We will say what the subjects were but without details.

The President: Good.

President Gorbachev: Let me wish you a good trip West.

The President: I look forward to seeing you. We want to make progress on the agenda that Jim and Mr. Shevardnadze talked about. I am looking forward to another visit with you.

President Gorbachev: I too Mr. President am looking forward to our visit and hope for success.

The President: Good day. Regards to Raisa.

President Gorbachev: Goodbye, Mr. President. (In English)

The President: That's very good. Goodbye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 93: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Shevardnadze, Washington, 10:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.

April 6, 1990

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze delivers a letter to Bush from Gorbachev, in which the Soviet president reviews the main issues before the coming summit. Economic issues are at the top of the list for the Soviet Union, specifically Most Favored Nation status and a trade agreement with the United States. Shevardnadze expresses concern about the lack of progress on these issues and the U.S. efforts to prevent the EBRD from extending loans to the USSR. He stresses that they are not asking for help, “we are only looking to be treated as partners.” Addressing the tensions in Lithuania, Bush says that he does not want to create difficulties for Gorbachev on domestic issues, but notes that he must insist on the rights of Lithuanians because their incorporation within the USSR was never recognized by the United States. On arms control, both sides point to some backtracking by the other and express a desire to finalize the START Treaty quickly. Shevardnadze mentions the upcoming CSCE summit and the Soviet expectation that it will discuss the new European security structures. Bush does not contradict this but ties it to the issues of the U.S. presence in Europe and German unification in NATO. He declares that he wants to “contribute to stability and to the creation of a Europe whole and free, or as you call it, a common European home. A[n] idea that is very close to our own.” The Soviets—wrongly—interpret this as a declaration that the U.S. administration fully shares Gorbachev’s idea.

The President: Let me say, welcome. You come at a complicated and interesting time. Jim has filled me in and I would like you to pay my personal respects to President Gorbachev. Please say anything that is on your mind. Our relationship is absolutely vital and I want it to be better. You know that the Baltics have caused a complication in our relationship. It is necessary to overcome that and I look forward to the Summit with President Gorbachev which I hope will be a productive meeting.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Thank you for your hospitality and attention. May I express my genuine satisfaction about the talks and negotiations while I have been here. I share your view that we are in a complicated time of dynamic events in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa. I met with the Secretary of State in Africa and there we both felt the atmosphere of change. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are great powers and have a special responsibility to our people and those of the world. We are guided by a very large responsibility. I want to convey from President Gorbachev and from the entire Soviet Union regards. Mrs. Gorbachev also asked that I pass her regards to Mrs. Bush. She wanted you to know that she values their relationship as well and hopes that it evolves over time.

The relationship between Secretary Baker and I has become one in which we have the ability to discuss international problems in an open, candid, frank and realistic way. I want to give you the original of the letter from Gorbachev. You have a copy. I will not recount its contents. There are ideas there about the problems and issues that Gorbachev thinks are important.

I thought that I should raise a few points. I brought a small piece of paper with general comments about U.S.-Soviet relations and their development. You have participated for a long time in the U.S.-Soviet dialogue and you probably remember what the dialogue was like when it began in 1985. I remember it as one of mutual complaints and recriminations. I remember sharp exchanges on humanitarian affairs, sharp recriminations about regional behavior, mutual feelings of animosity. The exchanges were quite emotional. A lot has changed. The process of getting to this point was difficult and painful. You were a participant in establishing the new relationship. Now looking at the agenda we have an extremely broad range of questions on which we engage: arms control and disarmament, humanitarian issues, regional issues, transnational affairs. Only the UN is a forum that encompasses as broad a range of issues as the U.S.-Soviet dialogue. The Summit agenda is very important. I think that it is becoming a norm that we discuss things openly and I think it is important that we have now a date for the Summit. Setting the date itself gives us a very important mark toward which to move. It will become like Malta pushing progress forward.

Concerning the goals of U.S.-Soviet relations, let me say that Gorbachev speaks of a possibly unique evolution of the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship. Talks that I have had here confirm this possibility. I know you are following our exchanges. We have been working well, have built a good relationship between ourselves. It is possible now to have constructive negotiations. Personal relations between us allow us to discuss even the toughest problems openly, allowing us to be totally candid and then to implement. After Malta, much has changed.

There are improvements and movement forward in the arms control talks despite the fact that we have very many important differences still. On the ABM Treaty on space we made good movement in Wyoming, on ALCM and SLCM we had good movement, no difficult questions remained. We have made progress on mobile ICBMs, telemetry encryption and non-deployed missiles. We have made good progress in the conventional arms talks. Despite skepticism, I believe that we have good prospects for the completion of those talks before the end of the year. Then nothing will stand in the way of the meeting of the 35.

We have made substantial progress on chemical weapons. I want to emphasize the importance of your proposals as discussed with me by the Secretary of State. Your readiness to stop at some point the production of chemical weapons will be an important step forward for us. We will be examining your proposals over the next few days and will reply soon. Despite problems in strategic arms, chances are still good to initial a treaty in June. Our intention to prepare and adopt a declaration of intent on future arms control despite certain differences is useful. There is mutual understanding that strategic arms control should be an

ongoing and continuing process. I think that the content of a statement should be obvious assuming we can find a way to agree.

On the protocol of nuclear testing, I have always said that the nuclear testing protocols are very important to us. Nuclear testing causes significant domestic problems for us. There are protests against nuclear testing. You have in the past had public protests too and the problem may become difficult for you in the future so we should move forward on nuclear testing. If we are able to prepare agreement on conventional arms we believe the practical preparations should begin for a Summit of the 35 and then after the Summit a CFE treaty could be signed. Subsequent phases could be identified for further conventional arms talks. We should identify a program for the future.

I will not speak in detail about the unification of Germany. At the next CSCE Summit, we will have to prepare and design some fundamental European security structures, some guarantee of security against a background of development not only in Germany but development in Eastern Europe. It used to be that any Soviet proposal immediately brought a negative response from the United States. We did the same thing. It is now happening that we are jointly proposing resolutions in the UN and other countries are voting for our proposals. This is a change. [...]

It is still important that we work to continue to reject certain stereotypes that are a legacy of the past. The discussion of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development seems to be in that category. We hear that you do not want the Soviet Union to be able to get loans. This should be a thing of the past, we are not looking for your help. We are only looking to be treated as partners. The sooner we abandon stereotypes the better for all of us. [...]

The problems of inter-ethnic relations are more dramatic. In the Trans-Caucases [sic] we have even had clashes and bloodshed. In Central Asia, in the Baltic republics, we have problems. The legal process has been lagging behind our political process. In the Constitution of 1977, which all republics adopted by referendum, there is the right of the republics to secede. But a mechanism was not established. No one asked what the conditions were, the circumstances under which this could happen. That was lacking. The laws that we adopted were unfortunately adopted after Lithuania took its steps. I know that this is being discussed here. I said at the airport that that is OK. We understand that it is an issue of debate in the United States and everyone can voice his opinion. I have said and I wish to reiterate that our main weapon is dialogue. With any state that is true but particularly with our own people. Perestroika and democracy, the right to self-determination, these are all a part of our program. Dialogue must be open, candid and frank with our people and with our leadership. The course of developments is difficult to predict. Different ethnic groups there [in Lithuania]—not everyone supports the Supreme Soviets ideas about secession and relations among the republics. We must make sure that there are no inter-ethnic clashes. In Lithuania, for instance, there are 350,000 Russians, 300,000 Poles, 100,000 Byelorussians; these are important numbers. There are also big factories that belong to the central government. We have concluded that it is necessary to have Presidential

authority in the Soviet Union to deal with some of these problems. In establishing that authority, we did it only to protect democracy. Gorbachev wanted me to tell you that he will adhere to the principles that he has stated.

The President: I would like to reply. This is what I was hoping you would do—explain your positions. I will not go into arms control. You and Secretary Baker will discuss that. I hate to start on a less positive note—but the feeling of our side is that we have moved back from positions that we thought we had agreed. I know you want progress—I do too. If we can stay with the progress we have made in the past and then move ahead I think we will get an agreement. I want an agreement. More talk is necessary but you should know that our people feel that there has been some pulling back on your side.

Let us see if we cannot get back on track. You ended your remarks on the Baltic states, laying out your constitutional issues, I need to make a few remarks: 1) We do not want to complicate, for the Soviet leadership, problems that you view as internal problems. Gorbachev knows that I am not using excessively hot rhetoric. As a matter of fact, I am under fire here for not using hot rhetoric. Not having recognized, however, the incorporation of Lithuania, we are in a position where we must support self-determination, and recognize their stated desire for independence, and democracy. We must hold to this position.

Churchill said, “Jaw, jaw, jaw; not war, war, war.” What he meant was, engage in dialogue. I know you have reservations about the word “negotiation,” we aren’t using that word. But let me say I think we are responsible for the restrained response of the Europeans. There must be a solution for this problem because that can keep our relationship on track. We are caught up in fifty years of history. We are respectful of your views and of your problems. But there must be dialogue and discussion. I don’t know if I have the right to be optimistic or pessimistic. But today I have heard that some discussions have begun and that is good.

I agree with what you say about the relationship. There is less suspicion though it is not completely removed. You cannot say that it has been removed on your side and I cannot say that it has been removed on my side. I hope the people will understand that we support perestroika and also Gorbachev’s handling of these difficult situations. We have seen you help bring about a peaceful evolution in Eastern Europe and there are, we understand, ethnic problems of the union in the Soviet Union. We are sympathetic, strongly sympathetic, to the Lithuanians and their desire for self-determination. I hope you will go forward into discussions with them. We don’t have a desire to interfere in your affairs, but the force or perceived crushing of Lithuania would be a problem. I know people think I hide behind the Congress and some Congress people, including Bob Dole, have told me they have had good conversations with you. When Primakov was here, he asked about the system and I said it was a difficult one. He thought I was some sort of heretic. But it is a good system. We want to move forward with you in arms control and on the economy. The Congress has a lot to say about that and as I said we all feel very strongly about the Lithuanian people and their rights. Gorbachev has said certain principles underlie perestroika. Given that and given

our own principles, if the aspirations of the Lithuanian people were suppressed I, too, would feel strongly about it. I want you to communicate the strength of my feelings to Gorbachev.

Let me return for a moment and say that we must recapture any lost momentum, set the stage for closing out any issues at the final Ministerial. We have an ambitious timetable. We will bring as much to closure as possible. We have a lot of work to do. There needs to be a lot of effort at the expert level. We've been able to sustain considerable progress during this turbulent period. I don't want to lose that progress. I will instruct our negotiators to go back and redouble their efforts. I hope you will do the same. On CFE, let me say, that I cannot imagine serious preparations for CSCE unless we have a CFE Treaty. I am confident that we will. I appreciate what you said about my proposal on chemical weapons. Let me say that I am troubled by the lack of progress on the original initiative on Open Skies. Your government will have to accept a really open regime, not just token flights, not just in good weather, not just in daylight. All must be open if we are going to have an effective regime. I told our military and intelligence services that they were going to have to accept this kind of openness. Not everybody liked it. This sends an important signal as to what kind of relationship we are building. It is more than symbolism, but it is also an important symbol and it will benefit our overall relationship. On human rights, let me say that I am pleased with the number of emigrants. We've made dramatic progress and this helps our overall relationship.

This is far more than symbolism, it is the emotional issue. I am working toward a waiver of Jackson-Vanik and we are making progress on a trade agreement. I hope your emigration law will have been passed so we can move forward on Most Favored Nations status. Let me communicate to you my personal interest in direct flight for Jewish emigrants to Israel. Please reconsider your position on this. Finally, let me say that the tolerance of ethnic and religious differences are not automatic fruits of democracy. It is necessary to work at it. On Germany, let me just say that we are interested to see that the Soviet Union and the West European countries have some similar concerns. I have talked with Chancellor Kohl and even though unification is coming fast, it is proceeding in an orderly fashion. The Two Plus Four will be a useful way to dissolve the Four-Power rights and responsibilities but we should not put new constraints on a sovereign German state. Germany has been a good democratic ally.

You know that we, the Germans, and the West European countries agree that the unified Germany should remain a full member of NATO, including its integrated military structures. Even some of the East European leaders are coming to that conclusion as a major element of stability in Europe. NATO is also the anchor for American military forces in Europe and thus our commitment there. You and President Gorbachev have said that you want the United States to remain in Europe. The United States will keep a significant military presence in Europe as long as our allies want us to. You should understand that a strong NATO is the best way to ensure our presence.

We are working with you and the other European countries to strengthen the CSCE. CSCE will be an important pillar in the new Europe but we should not try to make it do more than it can. Those of us who remember when Europe was not at peace do not want to return to notions of collective security that almost inevitably fail.

I understand you might be skeptical. I am often reminded of the enormous loss of life in World War II in the Soviet Union. Marshall Akhromeyev has told me about the 20 million people that you lost and I am not unsympathetic but I would urge that we stay in close touch. The U.S. willingness to stay in Europe is a stabilizing force. I want to convince Gorbachev of that. That it is in our interest and in the interest of a Europe whole and free and the common European home as you call it. It's not all that popular a position here at home. No President would want to stay in Europe if no one wants us to stay. There are pressures in the United States for us to go home, but they are containable pressures. I believe that stability is enhanced by a U.S. presence. You know our position on NATO. We feel strongly and we must convince you that a Germany in NATO is no threat to the Soviet Union. People ask me who is the enemy? I say unpredictability. An expanded NATO mission does not mean a threat to Soviet interests. NATO will take into consideration the new conditions.

On regional issues I agree that we have entered into a new phase. In Nicaragua we believe that the dialogue contributed to the change there. We still have reservations about Castro. And in the days of perestroika, he is a tremendous holdout. He is the old guard. We look forward to a peaceful resolution of Afghanistan. Let me say again, that we are not interested in seeing a radical regime that would exacerbate or threaten Soviet interests. It is not in the U.S. interest or in global interest to have that happen on your border. There is no thinking that there should be an alignment of our interests against yours.

Secretary Baker: We agreed we have discussed Afghanistan for fifteen months and that we find ourselves closer to a positive approach now.

The President: I was pleased when Secretary Baker conveyed your thinking on the Summit. Everyone wondered if moving this up a few days meant that there was some dire emergency. They asked if we had Lithuania in mind. I said that when things were more complicated there was even more reason to have discussions. It was more important. We are in total accord that an early Summit is a good idea. We have shortened the fuse and we will have to work hard but I am very happy about the arrangement. Let me now, if I may, invite you in to receive a personal letter. I hope that the Summit comes through with flying colors. Let me just say just one more word. I am not regarding the Soviet Union as a foe. We have our differences. We have come a long way in five years. I do worry about instability. Stability is something that we are for. Whatever we do in Europe we will keep stability in mind. Let me say too that I am hopeful that in the Middle East we will be able to move [sic] forward. The days of trying to exclude the Soviet Union from this process are over. We urge you to use your influence there as much as possible—to participate in whatever talks happen. On the economic

side, the problems do require attention. We want discussion on how we can facilitate what you're trying to do in your economic reform. There I would point to something like the Greenspan visit. So, let me summarize—my own assessment of where we are.

This is a vitally important relationship.

Problems are now arising because of Lithuania—that makes our relationship more difficult than three months ago.

We are determined not to contribute to the difficulties that you face at home.

I don't however want to convey a relaxed feeling. We feel strongly about the Lithuanians' rights.

I am determined to move forward in arms control.

I want to contribute to stability and to the creation of a Europe, whole and free or, as you call it, a common European home. A [sic] idea that is very close to our own.

I want you to convey my warm best wishes to Mr. Gorbachev. I want to tell him that I won't tell him my problems if he doesn't tell me his. There are enough for both of us to go around. [...]

Secretary Baker: I heard you say that there was an acknowledgement of Lithuania as an internal Soviet issue. What the President said was that it is your position that this is a domestic issue.

The President: We have never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. You must understand.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I have not come here to ask for anything on this. We have our laws, our rules. It is our state. We have our constitution. We will act within them without violence because it is against our principles to use violence. The U.S. position is up to you and to the American leadership. We are grateful for your restraint and for your support but your position is up to you.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA in 2009 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 94: Cable from U.S. Embassy Moscow to Department of State: “Gorbachev Confronts Crisis of Power”

May 11, 1990

This remarkable cable from U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock in Moscow just weeks before the Washington summit describes for the summit planners in Washington the severe “crisis of political power” facing Gorbachev, who seems “less a man in control and more an embattled leader.” The cable details the many signs of crisis, which is “of Gorbachev’s making, if not of his design” because “[f]ive years of Gorbachev’s perestroika have undermined the key institution of political power in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party,” without replacing it with any coherent, legitimate governance system. Full of specifics about “the powerful social forces his reforms have unleashed” and prescient about the various possibilities to come, the Matlock cable implicitly signals that Gorbachev would be coming to Washington on the downward curve of his power and his ability to deliver any of the items on the American agenda. In effect, the arms race in reverse that had been on offer from Gorbachev at the previous summits with Presidents Reagan and Bush now would be slowed to a crawl.

1. Confidential—Entire Text.

Summary

2. The U.S.-Soviet Ministerial will find the Soviet Union in a crisis of political power and facing fundamental choices—of Gorbachev’s making if not of his design. His own popularity is in sharp decline (though he remains the most popular Soviet political leader), and he himself appears on the defensive. His position is imperiled not by conservative apparatchiki or men on white horses, but rather by the powerful social forces his reforms have unleashed. The recent hesitancy on Party and economic reform and toughness over Lithuania are more likely the result of Gorbachev’s own desire to keep society from unraveling and reform on track than concessions forced by conservatives.
3. Gorbachev has yet to fashion a coherent system of legitimate power around new state institutions to replace the old Party-dominated, Stalinist one he has extensively dismantled. In the absence of a strong center of power, Soviet society has fragmented along ethnic lines and [sic] polarized on the political spectrum. The Party itself, as yet still the dominant political institution, is beset by factional struggle and probably doomed to split at the 28th Party Congress this July or shortly thereafter.
4. The success of Gorbachev’s effort to modernize Soviet society and at the same time keep the federation together appears increasingly problematical.

Democratization and market reforms are here exacerbating regional, ethnic, and class tensions and thus complicating the forging of the national consensus needed for further reform. True to his past, Gorbachev is probably inclined to move boldly to resolve the current crisis. He has said that the next year or year and a half will make or break the reform process. Nevertheless, he may find there is no bold departure that will allow him to keep both reform on track and the federation together.

5. If Gorbachev is forced to act in the short run, he may have to sacrifice pushing ahead with reform—at least temporarily—to maintain the Union, or risk his own political position. He has, however, already begun to prepare the public for the partial dissolution of the Union through the law on secession and the willingness to consider confederal relations between Moscow and the Union republics. He could eventually put together a coalition for continuing with reform even at the expense of accepting a truncated Union.
6. Despite the problems, Gorbachev has a reasonable chance of remaining at the helm for some time to come. His position is under pressure, not lost. Bold, effective use of his powers as president could reverse the current decline in his popularity and authority. No matter what Gorbachev's fate, change will continue in the Soviet Union for objective reasons, though its course will be uneven, at best, and could even be interrupted by an authoritarian interregnum. End Summary.

Crisis of Political Power

7. The mid-May U.S.-Soviet Ministerial will find the Soviet Union and Gorbachev in the midst of a deep crisis of political power. Standing at the center of a crumbling political order, Gorbachev looks less a man in control and more an embattled leader. Polls suggest that his popularity has dropped sharply over the past several months, even if he remains the country's most popular political figure. Criticism of him and his policies has grown sharper and more open, witness the jeering marchers on Red Square this May Day and public allegations of corruption. Gorbachev's own repeated protestations to the contrary, many Soviets, including embassy contacts across the political spectrum, wonder whether he has a clear sense of where he wants to take the country and how to get there. Many already regard him as a spent political force.
8. The signs of crisis are legion: sharply rising crime rates, proliferating anti-regime demonstrations, burgeoning separatist movements, deteriorating economic performance and stalled economic reform, confusing signals on party reform, and a slow, uncertain transfer of power from party to state and from the center to the periphery. These domestic shocks to the system are compounded by the pell-mell unraveling of the Soviet security system in Eastern Europe, also unaccompanied as yet by the establishment of any credible alternate European-wide institutions.

9. It is a crisis of Gorbachev's making, if not of his design. Five years of Gorbachev's perestroika have undermined the key institution of political power in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party. Gorbachev has:
- Compromised the Party's right to rule by gutting Marxism-Leninism, legalizing a multiparty system, and permitting revelations of the Party's past crimes, present corruption, and historically inept economic management;
 - Undercut the Party's ability to rule by removing it from the day-to-day management of the economy and insisting on the separation of party and state; and
 - Seriously strained the Party's will to rule by abandoning regional Party leaders faced by mounting public discontent, refusing to provide detailed policy guidance, and trimming the privileges of power.
- Moreover, Gorbachev has further undercut the authority and power of the Party by personal example, by preferring the role of President to that of General Secretary. At the same time, the flight from Communism in Eastern Europe over the past several months has only further shaken the Soviet Communist Party, making Communism appear the swamp of the past instead of the wave of the future.

New System Has Not Coalesced

10. As Gorbachev himself has admitted, he has yet to create a new system to replace the old Party-dominated, Stalinist one he has thoroughly discredited and extensively dismantled. To be sure, the elements of a new system are present: the new executive presidency; the reformed, more democratic system of Soviets; greater respect for the rule of law. They have not yet matured into a coherent whole, however.
- The Presidency with its two advisory bodies, the Presidential Council and the Council of the Federation, is still in the formative stages. These bodies are not playing the key decisionmaking role the Politburo once did;
 - The USSR Supreme Soviet remains too understaffed, underinformed, and inexperienced to be an effective legislature. The emergence of many republic and lower-level Soviets with a greater claim to legitimacy could marginalize the All-Union Supreme Soviet, while giving priority to regional interests over All-Union concerns. Moreover, none of the Soviets have adequate control over budgets or resources, which is necessary for true political clout.
 - The building of an independent judiciary, the key institutional guarantee of the rule of law, remains largely a promise.
11. More important, the new system itself lacks full legitimacy, though in this regard it is at least better off than the Party. Rhetorically, Gorbachev and his allies have sought legitimacy in democratic principles. Practically, however,

Gorbachev scarified his legitimacy as President by insisting that he be elected, not by popular vote, but by the Congress of People's Deputies. The Congress itself is far from a democratically elected body.

Society Fragmented and Polarized

12. In the absence of order imposed from the center, an increasingly politicized Soviet society has continued to fragment along national lines and polarize on the political spectrum.
 - In the past two months, the three Baltic States have declared their independence and Ukrainian separatists won big in Soviet elections in Western Ukraine. Moscow's grip over events in Transcaucasia is tenuous. Sentiment for independence in Moldavia is growing. Emerging Islamic fundamentalism has given a new edge to anti-Russian and anti-Soviet attitudes in Central Asia.
 - Across the country, Gorbachev and his reform program are coming under increasing pressure as left ad [sic] right-wing populism gains strength, organizes, and attacks Gorbachev and his brand of reform. Workers are organizing—largely by industry and region—to secure their share of a diminishing economic pie, with little regard for the greater interests of the country as a whole.

Party Splitting

13. At the same time, a bitter struggle is underway in the Party, which despite Gorbachev's reforms remains the dominant political institution, not so much for its soul as for its property and resources. Deep splits in the leadership are now public knowledge, as Gorbachev challenges "Ryzhkov's" economic reform program and Shevardnadze and Ligachev trade charges over the Tbilisi tragedy of April 1989.
14. Party factions now exist in all but name. The leftwing, centered on the "democratic platform," is waging an insurgency—apparently with some success—for control of Party organizations. The rightwing has apparently focused its hopes on the creation of a Russian Communist Party as a counterweight to what it sees as a too liberal All-Union Party. Bowing to the inevitable, the Party leadership has just endorsed such a Party and moved to coopt [sic] it after having railed against it for the past year. Non-Russian republic parties, where they have not already collapsed before national movements (as in the Baltics and Transcaucasia), are increasingly infected by nationalism and are pushing for a federal party structure. For the time being at least, the center, led by Gorbachev, is trying to keep the disparate factions united in a single party. Most observers, however, expect the Party to split at the 28th Party Congress this July or shortly thereafter.

Gorbachev on the Defensive

15. Gorbachev's political position is indeed imperiled, but not by conservative apparatchiks or men on white horses. The new political system, however tentative its beginnings, has provided him defenses against a palace coup like the one that deposed Khrushchev even if the other party leaders were united enough to attempt one (which they are not). The threat of a military coup is limited not only by the military's tradition of professionalism, but also by the fissures in the military itself, especially between senior and junior officers. Moreover, public sensitivity to the possibility of a military coup has complicated the task of any plotters who might be tempted by the breakdown of the country's other powerful institutions and organizations.
16. Rather, Gorbachev is threatened by the powerful social forces his reforms have unleashed. Recent moves by Gorbachev—the Central Committee “open letter” blasting party radicals, the tough stand on Lithuania, and the hesitancy on economic reform—are more likely the result of Gorbachev's own desire to keep society from unraveling and reform on track than concessions forced by conservatives.
17. Against the background of growing social unrest, perestroika, an effort to modernize Soviet society economically and politically while holding the federation together, looks increasingly problematical. The effort is becoming more deeply mired in internal contradictions.
 - Gorbachev has not been able to forge a new national consensus around democratization to replace the old one based on Marxist-Leninist ideology, buttressed by the liberal use of coercion, that was incapable of fostering the modern, high-tech society Gorbachev wants. Indeed, democratization and glasnost' have only exacerbated regional, ethnic, and class differences and undermined efforts at consensus building.
 - The lack of a national consensus impedes rapid movement on economic reform. “Shock therapy” along Polish lines strains the fabric of even a united society; it would likely tear the Soviet Union apart. Piecemeal reform, however, leaves reform at the mercy of conservative opponents still entrenched in the economic ministries.
 - In short, the two goals of perestroika—modernization and a strengthened Soviet federation—increasingly appear to be mutually exclusive.

Another Bold Departure?

18. For five years, Gorbachev has confounded the doomsayers. When faced by grave challenges, he has moved boldly and outmaneuvered his opponents while radicalizing and accelerating reform across the board. He is probably inclined to do the same at this critical juncture. He has noted several times that the next year or year and a half will make or break the reform process,

so he realizes he cannot delay bold departures indefinitely. But there are limits to the bold departures Soviet society will tolerate, especially if they do not produce the promised economic well-being. Events are pushing Gorbachev toward a choice he has tried hard to avoid, since there does not appear to be another bold departure capable of keeping both reform on track and the federation together.

Preparing to Sacrifice the Union?

19. If Gorbachev is forced to act in the short run, he may have to sacrifice pushing ahead with reform—at least temporarily—to maintain the Union, or risk his own political position. A policy that would permit the dissolution of the Union still faces substantial resistance within the political elite, where the military in particular would sacrifice reform for the territorial integrity of the Soviet motherland. But he has also already begun to prepare the public for at least partial dissolution. The law on secession sets high hurdles, but they are not too high for some of the republics—particularly Lithuania. Moreover, as an alternative to secession, he has recently abandoned his firm opposition to both confederal relations between Moscow and the Union republics and the creation of a Russian Communist Party. The latter should push the Party further toward an ethnic-based federal structure. A confederal state structure and a federal party one would spell the end of the Soviet Union as a unitary state and might make it a unified one in name only. Thus, down the road a bit, Gorbachev may be able to pull together support for sticking with the reform process, even if doing so requires accepting a truncated Union.

Will Gorbachev Hang On?

21. Despite growing problems, Gorbachev has a reasonable chance of remaining at the Soviet helm for some time to come. His position is under pressure, not lost. Should he demonstrate an ability to use his new power as President boldly and effectively on the nationality and economic crises he faces, he could reverse the current decline in his popularity and authority. If he vacillates, the probability of his removal will increase.

Change Will Continue, but Setbacks are Also Possible

22. No matter what happens to Gorbachev personally, the pressure for change from an increasingly restive and well-informed populace will continue over the longer term. The course of change will at best be uneven in coming years, however, and we do not exclude [sic] the possibility that an authoritarian interregnum might interrupt it. An authoritarian successor regime, however, if one should occur, would be incapable over any extended period of dealing with the underlying problems of Soviet society. It, or its successor,

would be pushed for objective reasons to choices similar to those Gorbachev
newe [sic] faces.

23. Leningrad minimize considered. Matlock.

*[Source: U.S. State Department, Moscow 15714, obtained through FOIA in 1997
by the National Security Archive.]*

Document No. 95: Record of Conversation between
Gorbachev and Baker (with Delegations), Moscow

May 18, 1990

This fascinating conversation covers a range of arms control issues in preparation for the Washington summit and includes extensive though inconclusive discussions of German unification and the tensions in the Baltics, particularly the standoff between Moscow and secessionist Lithuania. Gorbachev makes an impassioned attempt to persuade Baker that Germany should reunify outside of the main military blocs, in the context of the all-European process. Baker provides Gorbachev with nine points of assurance to prove that his position is being taken into account. Point eight is the most important for Gorbachev—that the United States is “making an effort in various forums to ultimately transform the CSCE into a permanent institution that would become an important cornerstone of a new Europe.” This assurance notwithstanding, when Gorbachev mentions the need to build new security structures to replace the blocs, Baker lets slip a personal reaction that reveals much about the real U.S. position on the subject: “It’s nice to talk about pan-European security structures, the role of the CSCE. It is a wonderful dream, but just a dream. In the meantime, NATO exists. ...” Gorbachev suggests that if the U.S. side insists on Germany in NATO, then he would “announce publicly that we want to join NATO too.” Shevardnadze goes further, offering a prophetic observation: “if united Germany becomes a member of NATO, it will blow up perestroika. Our people will not forgive us. People will say that we ended up the losers, not the winners.”

On arms control, the Soviet negotiators are intent on avoiding more concessions while agreeing with the U.S. insistence on making an exception for the Tacit Rainbow missile, which exceeds the Soviet-sought range limit on cruise missiles, and accepting—after some debate—the American demand that the issue of inspections of SLCMs on naval vessels be resolved through a separate non-binding political statement that is not part of the treaty. Here we find the Soviet leader channeling Reagan’s famous proverb, “trust but verify,” while the Americans duck any verification measures. Baker even rejects Gorbachev’s proposal for what would be purely symbolic inspections of “two ships a year,” something that would help Gorbachev with his domestic critics. Soviet frustrations are evident as Gorbachev resentfully describes American concessions on START as “just sunflower seeds,” while Shevardnadze laments that “two days will not be enough to list all our concessions” from recent negotiations. The last, one-on-one, part of the conversation deals with the situation in Lithuania.

[Shevardnadze was present at the first part of the conversation.]

Gorbachev: I am glad to see you in Moscow, Mr. Secretary. The regularity of our meetings is evidence of the fact that we not only want to maintain the capital we have accumulated, but we aim to increase it. And capital likes it when it grows.

The very fact that in the context of current events our contacts are becoming more, rather than less, dynamic, is significant in itself. The opposite would have happened in the past. When difficulties would arise in some part of the world—since we and you are involved everywhere one way or another—we would start looking at each other sideways and even take steps to slow down the development of our relations. Nowadays, the bigger and more difficult the problem, the more active our dialogue. I appreciate this.

At the same time I have to say that I've been observing the events unfolding and I'm coming to the conclusion that the United States has not yet finalized the process of determining its relationship to the Soviet Union. I've said many times before that at times like these, times of great changes, we cannot view our relations in the context of one presidential term. We are building the foundation for more than just the relationship between our two countries—we are setting up new relationships throughout the whole world. We are essentially the architects and builders of a new world.

I think that something is troubling you after all. I think there are two main problems.

First, there is the question of whether you should get seriously involved with us. We know that you have different advice and opinions on this. So far, at least, the President and you have shown restraint and withstood the pressure; you are holding your position. I value that.

Secondly, I was under the impression that we formed a mutual understanding about the kind of relationship we would like to have between our countries at the current stage. One of the central points of this mutual understanding is that both of us would like to see the other side strong and confident in its security—not just military security, but also economic and national as a whole. We are interested in a strong, confident United States, and you are interested in a strong, confident Soviet Union.

As far back as two-three years ago we predicted that we are standing at the threshold of a major regrouping of forces in the world. Back then we decided that in these circumstances, our cooperation is not only useful, but absolutely vital for us and for the whole world.

However, I think that periodically, when the time comes to move from the philosophical level to implementation with specific political actions, we see relapses of the past. We see actions based on the traditions and habits of the past decades.

I see that sometimes, when we are going through critical moments in our relationship, so to speak, you want to take advantage of the situation, to get the better of us. In the past, I would have simply taken note of this and continued to watch the situation. But right now our relationship is such that I can openly share my impressions with you.

What am I talking about specifically? You are a clear thinker, and I value that. That is why I will speak with you frankly and clearly. Let's look at Eastern Europe. Everything that is happening there now corresponds to what we discussed

before. I hope you see that our actions strictly follow what I told you then. At the same time, I have information that the goal of your policies is to separate the Eastern European countries from the Soviet Union.

Or take the question of German unification. Your position on this issue is contradictory. I do not know what drives it. Maybe you are afraid of European unification? I have said many times, both here and in Europe, and I can confirm it right now: we understand the necessity of American participation—not necessarily military participation—in all European processes. That is a given. But now you say: both Germanys are peaceful, democratic countries, and there is no reason to see any danger in what is happening. You say that we are exaggerating the danger. But I told President Bush, if this is the case, if you don't consider it an important factor, then why not agree to have united Germany join the Warsaw Pact?

Or another aspect: you say that we can trust the Germans, that they've proven themselves. But if this is the case, then why include Germany in NATO? You respond that if Germany does not become a part of NATO, it could create a problem in Europe. So it turns out you do not trust Germany.

I would understand if you provided some other, realistic arguments. I will be frank with you. If you said that Germany's absence in NATO would disrupt the existing security structure in Europe, I might have understood you. In that case let us think; let us look for a way to replace the current security structure, which is based on the existence of two military-political blocs, with some new structure. Let us think how to move towards this new structure. But you say that NATO is necessary right now and will be necessary practically forever. And you immediately add that the Soviet Union continues to have a large army and is strongly armed, that is why, so to speak, NATO will always be necessary.

In general, I repeat, your position and your arguments are contradictory. They do not agree with the core approaches we agreed to instill in our relations.

What is my point? Once again I will be frank. If a united Germany enters NATO, it will create a serious shift in the correlation of forces, the entire strategic balance. We will be faced with the question of what our next step should be. You are a logical thinker, so you understand this. Evidently we would have to halt all discussions in the sphere of disarmament; we would have to analyze what changes to make in our doctrine and positions at the Vienna negotiations, to our plans for reduction of military forces. The question arises why we are doing all of this. And it is a very serious question.

We would like to count on a serious approach from your side. And when we see signs that you are playing a game, we grow worried. Is it necessary? Can we allow our relationship to turn into a petty intrigue? The Soviet Union is undergoing major changes; we are going through a renewal, which is an inevitably difficult process. We see that sometimes you are tempted to take advantage of the situation. I think doing that would be a very big mistake.

And finally, the synthesizing aspect. We inform you about our plans. By carrying out *perestroika* and transforming our politics through New Thinking, we would like to move towards the West, the United States. We would like to open

our country to the world. We said that our goal is to integrate our country as fully as possible into the political, economic, and cultural processes taking place in the world. We had an understanding with you that new relations between the USSR and the U.S. will benefit not only our countries, but, considering the central position of our countries in the world, it would benefit the whole world. Now I ask myself: does the U.S. Administration follow the understanding we reached?

I will tell you how it looks from Moscow. From here we see the whole spectrum, and we see many nuances. We note many positive aspects in your position. At the same time, some elements worry us.

Right now we are approaching a major turning point in the Soviet Union, which will determine the future of our economy in the short and medium term. Naturally, it will reflect on all the other spheres of life in our country—political, social, cultural, interethnic relations, and international relations. We have come to the point where we need to introduce a regulated market economy in our country. This is a pivotal step in our *perestroika*. We are talking about fundamental changes at the very core of our economy.

I am talking about property privatization, antimonopoly measures, and the introduction of all types of property—stock ownership, cooperative property, collective property, private property. We will be reforming the bank system, organizing a stock market and commodity exchange, building a tax system, creating a social security system, and doing price reforms. It will be a radical change.

Therefore, we are talking about a critical point in our *perestroika*. And at this stage we have a right to count on the understanding and solidarity of our partners. In any case, events somewhere in Nagorno-Karabakh or Vilnius should not take up more of the Administration's and Congress's attention than this monumental turning-point. I will say more: we need not only understanding from our partners, but cooperation as well.

What is the U.S. doing? The U.S. welcomes *perestroika*, as you mentioned numerous times, Mr. Secretary. You quite competently described the problems we are facing today in our *perestroika*. At the same time, you caution everyone against helping the Soviet Union. You say: let them take care of themselves, helping them will only slow down the real *perestroika*.

I cannot understand that argument. It seems like instead of showing solidarity during this time, you would prefer that we figure out this mess ourselves. You might even think that if our situation gets worse, that won't be such a bad thing for you.

I am saying all of this so you can think it over before our meetings in Washington and Camp David. Will we continue what we started together, or will we step away from the coordinated approach and understanding of the roles and positions of our countries, our relationship during this historic period?

We both have to choose right now. I thought the choice had already been made. However, recently there have been moments when it seems that you are still deciding.

I wanted to say all of this in a confidential conversation, rather than in a meeting with a bigger group. I think this will be useful for the President when he is preparing for our meeting.

Baker: Mr. President, it is very good that you decided to raise these issues in a narrow circle. And in general it is good that you brought them up.

This gives me the opportunity to respond to these legitimate concerns. It will also give President Bush the opportunity, after he reviews the transcript of this conversation, to concentrate his attention on questions that are legitimate and appropriate topics for discussion.

It is true that at the early stages of this administration there was a period when we were deciding what our relationship with the Soviet Union should be. However, this period ended almost a year ago, after my trip to Moscow, my meeting with you, and lengthy conversations with E.A. Shevardnadze. Right now we are not debating the nature of our relationship with the USSR. We know very well what we would like the relationship to be. As I said in Wyoming, we would like our relationship to shift from competition to dialogue and cooperation on all fronts. Naturally, this will depend not only on the actions of the United States, but of the Soviet Union as well. However, I want to assure you that the U.S. leadership is not debating whether to place our stakes on your policies and *perestroika*. The President and I made the decision last year, and we will adhere to it firmly.

In October of last year I made a speech in which I emphasized that we will look for new avenues of cooperation with the USSR. I talked about the need to look for points of mutually beneficial contact. It is true that there is a great deal of debate in the United States whether your efforts will be successful. It is no secret that there are some people who would prefer to see you fail. These are the "Cold War" warriors, people who can't give up old habits. There are also quite a few people who criticize me and the President for placing too much hope in your success and for taking actions to help you.

This is all true. But I appreciate the fact that you noted our restraint, and our refusal to give in to the strong pressure we are under right now. I told E.A. Shevardnadze numerous times that I had my doubts whether we could hold on to our current positions.

We cannot forget that there are some substantial differences between us. For example, it is no accident that the flags of independent Baltic nations still hang in the lobby of the State Department. We never recognized their incorporation into the USSR. I touched upon this subject for the first time last year, on the way to Wyoming. Today, when this issue is quite critical, we would really like to see the beginning of a conversation that could eventually lead to a solution. At no cost do we want instability in the Soviet Union. We say this constantly. The President and I are always emphasizing that we are not seeking unilateral advantages from the changes happening in the Soviet Union. We are not playing political games or seeking to win. Later I would like to show you that our position on German unification aims to take your position and your concerns into consideration.

I've been asked on many occasions: what can we do to assist *perestroika*? I think that our first priority should be to help create a stable international environment for *perestroika*. That is exactly what I am trying to do.

During my last two addresses to the U.S. Congress I had to answer a multitude of questions regarding Lithuania, I had to defend our position. I was subjected to some serious criticism. The President and I were accused of giving up on our principles. I responded that our support for the aspirations of the Baltic States peoples does not contradict our support for *perestroika*. I emphasized the important interests at stake in our relations with the Soviet Union.

The agreement on conventional armed forces, START, continued cooperation in resolving regional conflicts—cooperation that did not exist in the past, but that we were able to establish in the past two years—all of these are of great importance to us.

Our policy shift from competition to cooperation does not mean we will always agree on everything. I mentioned our disagreement on the Baltic republics. It is based on history. At the same time, we understand your concern that the Baltics do not create a precedent for the other republics. I told E.A. Shevardnadze on several occasions that we take into account the legal differences between the Baltic States and other Soviet republics.

We have disagreements over Cuba. We understand that you have certain obligations to this country. But our differences remain. And yet, despite these differences, we have to keep moving from competition to cooperation. We understand the difficulties you are facing, and what kind of pressure you are under. We believe that everything you are doing right now—changing the political, social, and economic approaches that have formed in your country over the last 70 years—is a courageous effort and we support it. Over the last year and a half we succeeded in shifting American public opinion in the direction of supporting your policies. Still, we have a vocal minority that wants to continue the “Cold War,” they don’t want to trust the Russians. When the events started in Lithuania, when the economic embargo was introduced, some people started saying, “Look, Bush and Baker are naïve, while the bear remains a bear.”

Allow me to say a couple words about your remark that we are cautioning others against helping the Soviet Union. You must be talking about our position on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Indeed, due to internal political reasons, our position is that we cannot support the use of American taxpayer money to subsidize loans to state-owned enterprises or institutions in the Soviet Union. Moreover, under the current regulations of the Bank, the Soviet Union could borrow the entire amount of its contributed capital, which would be very difficult for us to push through Congress. This is due to the fact that, according to our data at least, you continue to allocate significant resources, 14–15 billion dollars per year, to support regimes in countries such as Cuba, which engage in subversive activities against other countries.

Therefore some people, some congressmen, say: “How can we support giving American taxpayer money to the Soviet Union, when the Soviet Union supports

Cuba?" The same goes for direct loans, which I discussed with your Minister of Finance when he was in Washington.

Gorbachev: Yes, he said that the Secretary of State flatly rejected this option. However, other countries are willing to assist us. For example, I was in Sverdlovsk recently and visited a factory that used to profile in the defense industry and space. Right now it is in the process of conversion. They have good plans, highly qualified workers, engineers. The problem is that the conversion will take 2–3 years, and in the meantime, while military production is stopped, their financial position is very difficult. *Philips* has expressed interest in this factory. In the beginning they were only interested in the factory's research work; they were not interested in investing money for conversion. Naturally, they are careful people. However, when we showed them the factory, they apologized and agreed to full cooperation. In two years this enterprise will be producing consumer goods competitive on any market.

This is an example of cooperation. Of course, we have long traditions with West Germany in this sphere. But I am convinced and I have said this many times, there can be no stable relations between the USSR and the U.S. if they are not supported by economic ties. What do we have right now? Grain purchases from the U.S. But is this real economic cooperation?

Baker: I agree with you completely.

Gorbachev: As for our connections with other countries, which you don't like, I can tell you this: in our administration and our Supreme Soviet there is a sentiment to build economic relations in a new way, in the spirit of new political thinking and in accordance with our country's domestic priorities. So we will rebuild them. But we cannot do it in one day. Only the United States can, for example, in one fell swoop impose an embargo on grain deliveries to the Soviet Union.

Baker: That was not under our administration. It was a big mistake, and it will not happen again.

A few months ago President Bush talked about the need to expand economic ties with the Soviet Union. I also think we have to look for ways to establish economic cooperation. However, I have to try to explain to you some of the historic factors in our domestic policy that we have to take into account in our country. We cannot give consent to grant loans (in excess of the Soviet Union's contributed capital) with funds allocated to the EBRD from American taxpayers, while we will be told that the Soviet Union is subsidizing countries like Cuba. At the same time, as you know, yesterday the United States voted together with other countries to grant the Soviet Union observer status in GATT.

Gorbachev: But you hesitated for a long time. Others agreed sooner.

Baker: Yes, like Japan, we hesitated because there are different opinions in the U.S. on this subject.

Gorbachev: Yes, here too.

Baker: I know that.

Gorbachev: We are being told that we supposedly betrayed the developing world; we threw it under the bus of imperialism. As if we are some kind of social

security for developing nations. They accuse us of betraying the Arabs, of practically fighting on the side of Israel. Right now this is compounded by the problem of Soviet emigrants settling in the Israeli occupied territories. In my opinion it is a real provocation, aimed at pitting the U.S. and USSR against each other.

We are being accused of giving away too much in the disarmament negotiations, that we are surrendering our positions, etc. In general, there is a major struggle, and in these circumstances I hope I can expect that you won't simply wait around for the fruit to fall into your basket.

Baker: No, we are not going to wait and do nothing.

Gorbachev: Because first, the harvest has to ripen. Otherwise you could end up with an empty basket.

Baker: We are for economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. For example, yesterday I suggested to E.A. Shevardnadze the idea of Soviet participation in the program to promote the development of Central American countries on an international basis. A similar program is being implemented in Eastern Europe by the "Group of 24," and it has raised 14 billion dollars for countries such as Poland and Hungary.

In September, in Wyoming, I said that we are ready for broad technological and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union, which we hope will be beneficial to both countries. We can defend mutually beneficial cooperation in Congress. However, we cannot get support for programs that involve the use of U.S. taxpayers' money.

Yesterday I said that as you develop your major economic measures, we are ready to help with consulting and offer the services of our chief experts and economists.

Gorbachev: I plan to raise the question of economic cooperation with the President. Today, when we are preparing for a major, radical economic turn, it is important for us to get some temporary reinforcement. The transition to a market economy may be accompanied by more serious complications, and we will need some oxygen during this time. Moreover, we are not asking for a gift, we need targeted loans. We have, for example, some Ministry of Defense enterprises that, after a 100–200 million investment, will soon start manufacturing civilian products worth 1–2–4 billion.

To avoid major complications associated with the introduction of new prices and market mechanisms, we will need trade credits as well. We estimated that we would need around 15–20 billion, which we will start to repay in 7–8 years. It's not much, and the need arose only because of the circumstances.

We wanted to postpone the implementation of radical economic reforms for a little while, however, political processes took such a turn that the old command economy system is being dismantled completely. We need to move faster to replace it with a new, market system. We need the resources I'm talking about in order to maneuver. Overall, 20 billion is not such a great sum for you or for us, but under the circumstances, we need it precisely at this moment. We are planning to present a market economy transition program to the Supreme Soviet by

May 25th. So I will bring up this question with the President. I must say, in the West this has generally been met with understanding.

Baker: The President is familiar with this issue. I discussed it with your Minister of Finance in Washington. When I return home, I will think it over again and speak with the President.

Gorbachev: We discussed it with a number of European representatives, and the necessary amount is mostly starting to emerge. However, we need understanding from your side, as well. The situation demands it. I personally don't like being in debt, but I am a realist and see that this solution is necessary.

Baker: I believe that you will not have much difficulty in obtaining credits for this sum in the West, especially if you are willing to take them with a respective mortgage, which, as I understand, you are.

I will speak with the President about it.

Gorbachev: I want to emphasize that only part of the credit will go towards the purchase of goods; the rest will go into investments, possibly including joint ventures, expanding production, conversion, etc.

Baker: I will try to convey to the President the importance you place on U.S. participation in this program.

Gorbachev: Precisely. After all, it would be strange if now, when we are talking about improving Soviet-American relations, the United States did not respond and participate.

I recently watched a documentary on the history of Soviet-American relations. It is truly a story of missed opportunities, the list is staggering. So I ask myself: will we really let ourselves miss this opportunity, too?

Baker: I will speak with the President. Please understand that due to domestic politics in the United States, giving a direct loan to the Soviet Union, or credits through multilateral financial institutions such as the EBRD, is met with traditional negative context.

Gorbachev: It could be done some other way, for example through a consortium.

Baker: You see, partly because of the inertia of historical stereotypes and partly for valid reasons, many people in the U.S. will say that we simply cannot give loans to the Soviet Union while it continues to supply MiG-29 airplanes to Cuba or resorts to economic pressure on the Baltic States. Of course to this you would say: are Vilnius or two-three MiG-29s really more important than *perestroika* in the Soviet Union? And this is a legitimate question. However, we cannot ignore a certain atmosphere that exists on the American political stage. The vast majority of our senators are in favor of halting the development of economic relations with the USSR until the problem in the Baltics is resolved. I don't need to tell you how sensitive the subject of Cuba is in the U.S. We have to take all of this into consideration.

Before saying a few words about the German issue, I wanted to emphasize that our policies are not aimed at separating Eastern Europe from the Soviet Union. We had that policy before. But today we are interested in building a stable Europe, and doing it together with you.

You say: if the U.S. trusts Germany, why include it in NATO? My reply: if you trust the Germans, then why not give them an opportunity to make their own choice? We are not forcing them to join NATO. The reason we want unified Germany to be a NATO member is not because we are afraid of the Soviet Union, but because we believe that unless Germany is solidly rooted in European institutions, conditions could arise to repeat the past.

You've studied history as I have, you remember the League of Nations. It's nice to talk about pan-European security structures, the role of the CSCE. It is a wonderful dream, but just a dream. In the meantime, NATO already exists and participation in NATO will mean that Germany will continue to rely on this alliance to ensure its security.

Gorbachev: And yet, what is the purpose of NATO? It was created for a different time, what is its purpose now?

Baker: If Germany is not firmly rooted in the existing security structure, there will be an entity in the heart of Europe that will be concerned with ensuring its security by other means. It will want nuclear security, whereas now, this security is provided by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. If Germany remains in NATO, it will have a much easier time renouncing its nuclear, biological, or chemical potential.

At the same time, I want to say that we understand why Germany's membership in NATO presents a psychological problem for the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev: Let's examine this issue from a military standpoint. Right now, when the Warsaw Treaty is rapidly turning into a purely political organization, Germany's membership in NATO will strengthen your military alliance.

Baker: In the immediate, short-term, maybe. However, we are currently talking about a change, about adapting NATO, giving it a more political nature.

We recognize the importance of reducing the Bundeswehr. However, we have a disagreement regarding the best platform to negotiate this. But we understand your concerns and we are taking them into account. I don't think that we are trying to get unilateral benefits.

We want stability in Europe, and we wish success to *perestroika*. Same as you, we went through two wars that were the result of instability in Europe. We do not want this to happen again.

Allow me to give you some examples of ways in which we tried to take your completely legitimate concerns into consideration as we developed our policy towards Germany.

First. We proposed to review the reduction and limitation of the Bundeswehr at the second phase of the Vienna talks, which should begin immediately after the signing of the first agreement on conventional armed forces. We spoke about this with the Germans, and I think they will agree.

Second. President Bush proposed to hasten the start of negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons.

Third. We proposed, and the Germans agreed, that Germany would pledge not to produce, develop, or acquire chemical or biological weapons.

Fourth. We proposed that for an agreed transition period, NATO troops would not be stationed on the territory of the GDR.

Fifth. We also proposed that for an agreed transition period Soviet troops would remain on the territory of the GDR.

Sixth. NATO will undergo an evolution to become more of a political organization. Moreover, there will be a major review of military strategy in light of the reduced effectiveness of the Warsaw Pact and the need to strengthen the political role of the alliances, as you mentioned.

Seventh. We put a great deal of effort into reaching an agreement on Germany's borders. Right now we have a solid understanding that a united Germany will include only the territory of the GDR, FRG, and Berlin. This is important to the Poles, as well as some Western European countries. Evidently it is also important to the Soviet Union.

Eighth. We are making an effort in various forums to ultimately transform the CSCE into a permanent institution that would become an important cornerstone of a new Europe. This institution would include all the European countries, the Soviet Union, and the United States. I proposed to hold a meeting of foreign ministers of 35 countries this September in New York, to prepare for the Summit of the CSCE.

And finally, the ninth point. We are actively trying to make sure that the Soviet Union's economic interests are duly considered during the unification process.

We are fully aware that including a united Germany in NATO is a political problem for you. Nevertheless, we believe that if a united Germany is firmly anchored in the framework of this time-tested security institution, it will never want to have its own nuclear capability or its own independent military command.

Militarily, NATO will look completely different as the result of the changes currently taking place in Central and Eastern Europe.

Of course, if Germany does not want to remain a member of NATO, then it won't. The United States cannot force Germany to be in NATO. This is not a question of whether we trust the Germans. We sincerely believe that NATO is the structure that provides the greatest stability in Europe. And not only in terms of East-West relations. There are a few pockets of instability in Europe, arising from inter-ethnic rivalries, ethnic tensions, etc. Often this happens in European countries that have nothing to do with the tension between the East and the West.

The fact that Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary supported our approach is not the result of American diplomatic efforts. We welcome their position, but we did not actively seek it. Incidentally, we expressed our opinion that it would be good for some of these countries to establish regional associations.

So, I understand your concern, it is quite legitimate. I hope that my explanations were useful to you.

Gorbachev: What if your words turn out to be prophetic and a united Germany will not want to remain in NATO? You say that you can't force it. What will happen then?

Baker: I would like to ask you in turn: if Germany is not in NATO, what do you propose?

Gorbachev: I would like us to do something during the negotiations, before the unification. We have this opportunity right now. When this process is finished, we won't have any more opportunities to suggest anything else. That's the point.

Your reasoning is based solely on the idea that a united Germany must be a member of NATO. You are not offering any alternatives. At the same time, you say that at some point Germany could decide not to be in NATO. Let's imagine what would happen when the negotiations are over. Germany will have the right to leave NATO, but we won't have a chance to offer any alternative. Right now we have this opportunity, we have the rights and responsibilities of the four victorious powers. The unification process is not yet complete.

If we decide that a united Germany will not be a member of any military organization, then of course the question arises about its status. I think it should be a democratic, demilitarized country with clearly defined borders, etc. It would be a new situation, and we would need to secure it in a final peace settlement. The settlement could include your nine points. This would be something everyone could understand. It would be a more or less of a middle ground, though of course Germany would still be closer to you, but the balance would be better.

Baker: You are suggesting that the document stipulate that Germany would not have the right to remain in NATO?

Gorbachev: Germany would be outside any military groups. The same as many other countries.

Baker: So you are talking about a neutral Germany?

Gorbachev: I don't know. Maybe non-aligned. Maybe some special status. For example, France has a special status.

To conclude this part of the conversation, I would like to suggest: let us thoroughly think about this one more time. We will think, and you should think. Let us continue this conversation in Washington. And if none of my arguments convince you, then I'll suggest to the President and announce publicly that we want to join NATO too. After all, you say that NATO is not directed against us, that it is just a security structure that is adapting to the new reality. So we will propose to join NATO.

Baker: E.A. Shevardnadze was asked about this at a press-conference in Bonn.

Shevardnadze: At the time, I responded that we have not yet submitted an application for admission to NATO.

Gorbachev: In any case, it is not a purely hypothetical question. It's not some absurdity.

Baker: This is interesting. You said there are many neutral and non-aligned countries. This is true. But it is by their choice, not because someone forced them to take this status.

Gorbachev: Well, maybe the Germans will take this status themselves. In any case, there should be some fallback option. Your position is based on only one option. It is what you want. But we want something else. We can't proceed just based on what you want.

Baker: We want it only because they are asking for it themselves. You say that it is unacceptable for you. But neutrality cannot be imposed. You cannot demand it as a condition for the termination of the four powers' obligations. This would be contrary to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, which clearly states that countries have the right to participate in alliances. Moreover, such an approach would place Germany in some special category; it would cause a great deal of resentment and hostility on the part of the Germans. In other words, it would sow the seeds of future instability, which is exactly what we don't want.

Gorbachev: What makes you think that resentment will occur only if Germany is not a part of a Western alliance?

Baker: There will be resentment if Germany is separated into some kind of special category, if it is forced to do something against its will. If Germany makes its own choice to become a member of the Warsaw Pact, that would be a different matter.

Gorbachev: If they want to join the Warsaw Pact, what would your response be?

Baker: We will not object, if it would truly be their free choice.

Gorbachev: Thus, we can note that you would react with understanding to such a request.

Baker: The Helsinki Final Act states that any country can be a member of any organization or alliance.

Gorbachev: Can I conclude that should a united Germany want to become a member of the Warsaw Pact, the United States would meet this with understanding?

Baker: We would say: in our view, Germany should be a full member of NATO, however only by its own choice.

Gorbachev: And still, in principle: if a united Germany, based on the principle of the freedom of choice, uses its right to choose the organization it wants to belong to, and decides to become a member of the Warsaw Pact, will you be able to give your consent to that?

Baker: We will say that, in our opinion, it is the wrong decision from the point of view of future stability. However, we will uphold the Helsinki principles.

Gorbachev: I see. Well, I am satisfied: you essentially gave arguments in support of my position. Because we are saying that a united Germany's membership in NATO will change the correlation of forces that has ensured stability in Europe for the past 45 years. Therefore, our argument is a mirror of yours.

Baker: No, I cannot agree with that.

Gorbachev: We must look for a way to combine our approaches. The unification of Germany is a new reality, and this new phenomenon is testing our ability to find solutions based on a balance of interests. After all, we have said this is what we strive for. Right now, when this approach is subjected to the first serious test, we must look for a mutually acceptable solution.

Baker: Let me ask you: would you consent to Germany's free choice to remain a member of NATO?

Gorbachev: I am honest with you and I told you: if a united Germany will belong to NATO or the Warsaw Pact, it will lead to a change in the strategic

balance in Europe and the entire world. I think in the current situation you should not leave us stranded. It is a very important moment, and if this happens we could take completely unexpected steps. So let's look for mutually acceptable solutions.

Shevardnadze: I would like to say, Mr. Secretary of State, that when you are thinking about united Germany's membership in NATO, you forget that no one has yet cancelled the Potsdam Agreement. Theoretically, this Agreement defines the structure, military-political status, and conditions such as denazification, demilitarization, and democratization of Germany. It also defines our rights, the rights of the four powers. Right now we are being asked to surrender these rights, but on the basis of a unilateral decision, which only takes into account the interests of the West and does not take into account our concerns.

Secondly, I think the Secretary of State is right when he says that we must consider the public opinion in the United States. And you are talking about the minority of your population. So, I want to say: I am certain that if united Germany becomes a member of NATO, it will blow up *perestroika*. Our people will not forgive us. People will say that we ended up the losers, not the winners.

One more thing. I do not share your opinion that pan-European security is only a dream, some kind of fantasy. The CSCE process is a reality. We have to think about European security structures that would not be based on blocs. We can create them.

Gorbachev: And our potential membership in NATO is not such a wild fantasy. After all, there was a big coalition at one time, so why is it impossible now?

Baker: I understand your point that you cannot be left standing on your own right now. Frankly speaking, this is exactly why we proposed the "2+4" mechanism. We recognize the necessity of your participation in regulating the European process, including the process of German unification.

Gorbachev: Exactly right.

Baker: We understand your domestic political factors as well.

Gorbachev: Yes, we are already hearing people say that the mechanism has turned into "1+4." And the Soviet Union is the one, while Germany is in the Western four.

Baker: And one more thing. I said that pan-European security is a dream. What I meant is that it is a dream today. We made concrete proposals on how to build its structures in order for it to become a reality. In the meantime, we consider it important for Germany to be firmly anchored in security institutions, so it is not tempted to create some kind of security structure of its own. We think it is important for Germany to be a member of the European Economic Community, even though we are not members. We have seen the past results of having a separate, neutral Germany.

Shevardnadze: Two words on the issue of the size of the Bundeswehr. We think a decision on this matter should be made in the framework of the "six," and afterwards consolidated in the framework of the CSCE, at the Vienna

negotiations on conventional armed forces. After all, the issue of unified Germany's military potential has to be tied to the external aspects of German unification.

Gorbachev: Summing up, I want to say that we had a good session of “throwing around ideas” before the meeting in Washington.

I recently gave a speech in connection with the 45th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany. I talked about the 27 million Soviet citizens who died in the war. But I did not tell the whole story. We lost the best part of our population. And the 18 million wounded and shell-shocked! And the damage to the health of those who, hungry, cold, and poorly dressed, worked on the home front. It was an enormous shock for the entire nation.

Therefore, this is a very complex situation. Our people will not accept a unilateral decision. Not only we, but you too will find yourselves in conflict with our people. So think about it again.

In conclusion, I want to say—do not believe the people who claim that the Soviet Union would like to drive the United States out of Europe. On the contrary, we are convinced that it is impossible to achieve anything in Europe without the United States.

Baker: We never believed such claims.

Gorbachev: Although I am sure that you hear this thesis thrown around, as we do.

[conversation continued with delegations]

Gorbachev: Greetings to my colleagues on both sides. We need your help. I think that the importance of the Secretary of State's visit is clear. It is determined by the fact that this visit is happening literally on the eve of the summit. We will review what we already have and what still remains to be done. We have time to accomplish more.

Today I would like to hear your information about the state of [negotiations] on the strategic offensive weapons. Maybe we will be able to resolve some issues right now, and on some, we will issue home assignments.

Baker: E.A. Shevardnadze and I had comprehensive discussions on many issues related to reduction and limitation of armaments, economic cooperation, regional problems, in particular on Afghanistan and Cambodia. Today, in the second part of the day, we will continue our discussion of regional issues and also we will hear reports of the groups on human rights and transnational problems. I would like to mention the fact that there was some progress on eight out of twenty names on the list, which President Bush gave you on Malta.

Gorbachev: If we are talking about progress, Ambassador Matlock has created probably the longest line in Moscow in front of his Embassy.

Matlock: It is becoming shorter.

Baker: Unfortunately, in one case, “progress” meant that the person on the list passed away. Seven received an exit permit. However, twelve people are still being refused an exit visa. Mainly with reference to their knowledge of state secrets. However, none of them had access to classified work for at least ten years.

Therefore, we would ask you to give some consideration to this list before your departure for Washington.

Gorbachev: We'll see.

Baker: The majority of our conversations focused on arms reductions and limitations. As you know, we gave E.A. Shevardnadze our new proposals in Bonn, which the Soviet side then responded to. Over the course of further negotiations we made some progress, but, unfortunately, we cannot yet say that the main questions of strategic offensive weapons have been resolved. President Bush hopes that an agreement on SLCMs and ALCMs will be achieved before your visit to the US. It is very important to him to be able to announce during the visit that we reached an agreement on the main points of the future treaty.

In the course of this meeting we discussed some other aspects of strategic offensive weapons as well. As far as I know, we made some progress on the issue of non-circumvention [as in the text] [sic] and a few others.

We are also prepared to discuss issues concerning the reduction of conventional armed forces, although we do not consider bilateral discussions to be a forum for negotiations and a way to reach an agreement on this issue.

The progress made in preparing the protocols for the nuclear testing agreements gives us every reason to believe that these protocols will be ready for signing at the Summit.

We also moved forward in preparing a joint statement on non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as missiles and missile technology.

We are very close to agreement on a bilateral agreement on the destruction of chemical weapons. This will be a big step forward and we are sure that it will be well received around the world.

Shevardnadze: As the Secretary of State noted, the issues of disarmament were the priority at our meeting. I think as the result of our work we have good preconditions to announce in Washington that we have an agreement on the main points of a 50 percent reduction in strategic offensive weapons.

Two problems appear to be the most difficult and delicate. These are air-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles. I will go over the unresolved issues in these spheres.

The question of limiting the number of heavy bombers with ALCMs. The United States is against any kind of limits. Now the Secretary of State has in principle given his consent to establish limits, however, the proposed level—180 units—is too high. Perhaps in the course of this meeting we will be able to reach a compromise.

The second issue concerns the feasibility of discerning nuclear SLCMs from non-nuclear ones. The United States is against such an approach, since they say our agreement not to include any control measures removes the question of distinguishability. This is a serious hurdle. The lack of distinguishable features would prevent us from having a real idea of the state of affairs in this sphere.

We have not yet agreed on the exchange of information regarding naval nuclear weapons with ranges exceeding 300km.

We have not resolved the issue of excluding American non-nuclear missiles “Tacit Rainbow” from the treaty on the range limit of ALCMs. According to the agreement reached in Moscow in 1988, it was supposed to be counted as a nuclear missile. The American side is asking to make an exception.

Gorbachev: In general, how do things stand with control? This is a very important question if the future treaty is to pass the Supreme Soviet.

Shevardnadze: We have reached agreement on the majority of questions in this sphere.

Baker: We have not fully resolved the issue of control over ground mobile ICBMs.

Shevardnadze: According to the current position of the U.S., the Soviet side would have to send 40–50 notifications on the movement of such missiles daily. We are for control, but such an approach would create serious difficulties. I think we should continue discussing this question in the working groups.

Gorbachev: Indeed, it looks like you are avoiding control over SLCMs, which are mobile missiles, while demanding 40-50 notifications per day on our mobile missiles.

Mr. Secretary of State, you recall how in the beginning the United States did not want to discuss SLCMs at all, while we said that without an agreement on this problem, there would be no treaty at all. So we made a serious concession, we are practically saying that we will take your word for it. What will we tell the Supreme Soviet, how can we explain this decision?

Baker: I will reply to your question.

I will start with the fact that two weeks ago we had big differences on the [subject of] SLCMs and ALCMs. The main differences concerned three issues.

The question of range of ALCMs. From the beginning you argued for the range limit of 600 kilometers. Marshal Akhromeyev even insisted that he reached an agreement on that with P. Nitze several years ago. We don’t think so. Our initial position was 1500km. Before the meeting in Bonn, our position was 800km, yours—600km. In Bonn, I told the Minister that if we find a satisfactory resolution on other elements of the package, and in particular, if an exception could be made for the missile “Tacit Rainbow,” the range of which is over 600km, then we will agree with your position on the range limits, because you explained to us that your entire anti-air defense system is built on the assumption of precisely that range.

The second issue—the problem of the overall limit on the number of SLCMs. You raised it twice in your conversations with me.

Gorbachev: And I raised it about ten times before you.

Baker: In Bonn I said that even though we always rejected that approach, we are ready to establish the limit of 1000 units. But I have to be honest—such a decision does not sit well with many of us.

Third issue—the limit on the number of heavy bombers. In Bonn I said that having met you halfway on two of the three main issues, we expected that you would agree with our position on the third one. However, yesterday we showed flexibility.

The fact of the matter is that President Bush really wants all issues resolved before the Washington summit. So, yesterday we agreed to the approach you were proposing, on the basis of which heavy bombers over a certain limit would be counted by their real ALCM armament. The only question is the quantitative parameter of this limit.

Thus, we met you halfway on the three main issues that divided us three weeks ago.

There still remains the question of the range limit of SLCMs covered by the political statement. Our position is 300km, yours is 600km. We understand that you have a significant number of SLCM in the range between 300km and 600km. But yesterday for the first time the Soviet side raised the question of including other naval nuclear arms in the statement, besides SLCMs.

Now I will explain why it is quite difficult for us to accept your proposal on differentiating between nuclear and non-nuclear SLCMs. First and foremost, SLCMs are covered by political statements that are not part of the treaty. Nuclear ALCMs are covered by the treaty itself, therefore it is quite natural to differentiate them from non-nuclear [missiles].

We have thousands of non-nuclear SLCMs. A special feature of their production is that it is the same as the nuclear. You are essentially asking us to transfer the approach developed for ALCMs to a completely different situation. I would say it would be pushing the control over SLCMs through the back door. But we always maintained that they could not be controlled. That is why they are considered separately.

As for your argument that you won't know how many SLCMs we have, this is not the case. [Our] budget is published, and you know how many nuclear and non-nuclear sea-based cruise missiles we produce every year.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize one more time that we made great efforts in order to meet you halfway on the main issues of the SLCMs and ALCMs.

Shevardnadze: If I start listing everything that happened in the course of our negotiations, two days will not be enough to list all our concessions.

Gorbachev: That's true; the American side should not assign all the credit for achieving the agreement to itself.

Shevardnadze: It would be difficult for us to defend this treaty in the Supreme Soviet. We made the biggest concession to agree to resolve the issue of SLCMs on the basis of a political statement.

Gorbachev: How can we convince the Supreme Soviet?

Shevardnadze: This will not be easy. Besides, we gave up [our right] of inspection of any submarines and ships with SLCMs. Therefore, we have all the right to expect that the United States would move more in the direction of our position, as we have done, taking into consideration the specific concerns about which the U.S. side told us.

Gorbachev: If your unwillingness to agree to inspections of ships with SLCMs is related to your concern that all your ships would be subject to such

inspections, then maybe we could agree on the following: let us establish a minimal quota, let us say, two ships a year, which would be subject to selective inspections. Or does your position consist of the condition that an alien foot should never be able to step on an American ship?

Baker: We, of course, would prefer precisely this solution. We do not want to start movement down this slippery road.

Gorbachev: A quota—one or two selective inspections per year—would permit us to tell the Supreme Soviet that some control was envisioned. What is it that bothers you? Tell me honestly.

Baker: We always held the position that SLCMs could not be controlled and therefore could not be considered in this treaty. And we welcomed your willingness to agree to the resolution of this in the framework of a separate statement.

Gorbachev: We welcome the appreciation you showed of how serious this issue is for us. If it is not resolved, there would be no treaty. But we have to do something on the inspections.

Baker: We agreed to establish an overall limit on the number of SLCMs. It was not easy for us. But if you are saying that the absence of inspections of SLCMs puts the treaty in danger, then the situation truly becomes very different.

You are asking how you would persuade the Supreme Soviet.

Gorbachev: And ourselves too.

Baker: We will also have to persuade ourselves and the Congress. For example, the treaty does not envision a prohibition on modernization of the heavy ICBMs, even though we were seeking it actively. You, however, are telling us that there could be no talk about such a prohibition. So we had to meet you halfway, even though in our country very few people are happy about that. This is the logic of compromise.

Gorbachev: I think that every position about which we are negotiating should presuppose some form of inspection. We agreed to a separate document on the SLCMs. But in order for that to be a serious document, we need a mechanism of control or inspection. You are worried that in that case almost the entire American fleet would suddenly be subject to inspection. OK, we are willing to free you from that [concern], by establishing the quota of two inspections per year. This is an insignificant number, considering the fact that you have hundreds of ships.

Baker: If we propose to the Congress to approve the limitations on any kind of weapon systems, then the Congress would ask—is that possible to inspect. The SLCMs are not possible to inspect. Neither you nor we can inspect them.

Gorbachev: We only propose selective inspections. One or two per year. And you are against any inspections. Why?

Baker: Because the SLCMs are not part of the treaty. And precisely because they cannot be controlled effectively. And as far as it is the fact, we cannot agree to a regime that does not provide an opportunity for an effective control. “Some kind” of control would be a mistake. The Congress would not agree to that, they would say it was a fiction. The Congress would say to us that if the treaty was not limiting the SLCMs and that the issue was resolved by a political statement, then

why would you need to establish a system of inspection, which would not be effective anyway.

We made very serious progress in the direction of your position on the SLCMs and the ALCMs. We accepted your position on the range limits of the ALCMs, on the overall limits on the SLCMs on limiting the number of heavy bombers. All these issues, which were left “hanging” during the last five or six years, were resolved in the last two weeks.

Shevardnadze: If one was to count concessions, then the biggest concession is the agreement by the USSR to resolve the issue of the SLCMs on the basis of a political statement.

Baker: We admit that.

Gorbachev: In the treaty on the 50 percent reduction of strategic offensive weapons, the Soviet Union made such a concession that the American side did not even anticipate. I am talking about the agreement to cut the number of our heavy missiles by half. We agreed to that in Reykjavik. Compared to that, American concessions are just sunflower seeds.

Baker: Tell that to the Congress.

Gorbachev: Are you inviting me? Seems to me that this is the first time. Seems like members of Congress don’t want me to speak there for some reason.

I will continue. If you look at the structure of the Soviet forces subject to reductions, you will see that the Soviet Union is destroying hundreds of very modern missiles. And you will be cutting the old trash, recyclables, which you would be eliminating in any case. As far as submarines are concerned, yes, here you are cutting more modern weapons as well, but on the whole, the situation is such that our Supreme Soviet could ask the legitimate question: why does the Soviet leadership agree to such reductions, which weaken the basic units of our arsenal?

If one looks at the prospects of our further negotiations, then what are the consequences of the current American position? The United States is taking out the strict limitations or strict inspections of precisely the kinds of weapons—planes, sea and air-launched cruise missiles—that focus on development and modernization, and to which the Soviet Union has been paying less attention. What are the implications of such a position? It would make further negotiations more difficult.

Baker: I agree with your words that the Soviet Union made a big concession by agreeing to a political statement on SLCMs. We acknowledge that this made the treaty possible. But as soon as you agreed to it, certain consequences were to follow.

For our part, we feel that we also made significant concessions to the Soviet Union. In particular, [we agreed to] establish a limit on the total number of SLCMs and a formula to limit the number of heavy bombers.

I do not think that our agreements will complicate the process of arms reductions and limitations. Let alone that limits under the treaty will be in effect for at least fifteen years, I want to mention the possibility of accepting at the summit a joint statement for future negotiations on strategic offensive weapons. We made good progress in preparations and the work continues.

Gorbachev: And what will the military men who are here with us today say about this?

Akhromeyev: The main breakthrough on the SLCM issue was achieved in Washington in 1987. Everyone here knows that this is where the foundation was laid. In a joint statement, the parties agreed to establish a separate limit on the number of SLCMs and find means of control. If we didn't find these means, it is because only one side was interested in this, the Soviet Union. The United States was not. Therefore, the lack of control, as noted by President Gorbachev, really does create a problem.

Gorbachev: We will be suspicious of your intentions. The question will arise whether we can trust the United States.

Baker: Every year we will make a statement on cruise missiles, they will be politically binding in nature. The American system is quite transparent, and it is inconceivable that the United States could produce SLCMs in violation of the agreement. This is guaranteed by the open nature of our defense budget.

Gorbachev: If this is the case, then why is it not known how many nuclear SLCMs you are planning to produce?

Baker: It seems you know how many. The level proposed by the Soviet side—760 units—is almost entirely in line with our plans. The difference is only two units.

Gorbachev: What we know is another question. Our intelligence services work, and so do yours. And it seems they are feeding each other information (general laughter).

Baker: By the way, the joint statement from the Washington summit does not say that the parties will find a solution to the issue of control over SLCMs. It says they will seek a solution. And we tried to find it.

Gorbachev: So maybe we should add a formula to the text of the political statement that the parties will seek a solution to this problem? This way, we will at least confirm the old position.

Baker: You are suggesting to repeat the Washington formula?

Gorbachev: At least if such a political statement will be made simultaneously with the conclusion of a treaty on SLCMs, if the sides state that they will continue to search for a solution to this problem, we will be able to convince the Supreme Soviet. If we can't make progress, then at least let us confirm the old position. Otherwise it will be a setback.

It seems to me that the phrasing that both sides would keep searching for a solution to this problem, which was included in the political statement, would help both you, and us, to avoid many problems in the course of ratification. I would ask you to think about this.

Bartholomew: Right now we are working on the basis of the Soviet draft of the document. And it did not mention the means of inspection. It only talks about the measures of cooperation.

Gorbachev: Yes, I know. But please allow the President of the USSR to have his own opinion.

The issue of ratification of the future treaty is an exceptionally important issue. If we sign the treaty and it is not ratified, it would be trouble, a scandal.

Baker: That already happened once before. We will think about your proposal.

Gorbachev: The issue of limits of heavy bombers with ALCMs. This is an important thing. We proposed the limit of 120 planes, and above that—according to the actual number of ALCMs. Your proposal is 180 heavy bombers. The difference is 60 planes. [This is] a big difference, corresponding to 1,200 units of ALCMs. Maybe we should split that difference in half and establish the limit of 150 planes.

Baker: I agree. Next issue.

Gorbachev: Range limits. Here I take your position.

Baker: Are you ready to make an exception for Tacit Rainbow?

Gorbachev: Yes, I am ready.

Baker: The issue that remains is the range limits for SLCMs.

Gorbachev: We need to agree on the number of nuclear-equipped SLCMs. Let's meet each other halfway. In other words—800 units.

Baker: I think we should split the difference between our current position and your current position—760 and 1,000. Then the limit should be 880 units.

Gorbachev: I agree. But then we need to affirm that both sides would be seeking methods of inspection of SLCMs.

Baker: This is your proposal.

Gorbachev: At least it allows us not to step backward.

Baker: We will consider it. We still have planned conversations today and tomorrow. But I would like to be reassured that you propose to restate the formula that was included in the Washington joint statement. In other words, you are not proposing that the two sides would announce that they would actually implement the stipulations of the political statement. They would just be seeking ways to inspect SLCMs. This will be just a statement of intentions.

Gorbachev: Yes, I propose the Washington formula. It would not be easy for us to defend this position in the Supreme Soviet, but at least we will be able to say that we have been seeking and will continue to seek a solution for this issue. Otherwise, it might seem that this issue was buried.

Baker: If we accept your proposal, then you will not raise the issue of distinctive features of nuclear-equipped SLCMs?

Gorbachev: I think we will accept the formula that at the next stage [of negotiations, both] sides would raise all the issues of concern to them. We can remove them for right now.

Baker: I want to return to the question of range limits for SLCMs. The statement will include SLCMs with a range over 600km. With regard to the confidential exchange of data, we believe the data should be confined to SLCMs with a range of 300-600km, and not other nuclear weapons like bombs, etc.

Gorbachev: I understand your position. I think we agreed on some things, but some details remain that need to be worked out. Let us not rush through this.

Baker: But my consent for the range of SLCMs will depend on the details.

Gorbachev: The decisions will be made in a package.

Baker: I repeat, I can agree to a range of 600km on the condition that we will come to an agreement on what information will be transmitted in the 300-600km range.

Gorbachev: This question should be worked out.

We will have a statement on future negotiations on strategic offensive weapons and strategic stability. In that statement we could note that the sides will review the issues on which they were not able to reach agreement in the treaty on 50 percent reductions.

Baker: I agree that we will have such a statement, if we can agree on wording.

Some more questions on strategic offensive weapons have not been resolved yet. I don't know if we have the opportunity to discuss them right now. I am talking about the issue of flight tests of heavy ICBMs, and the question of limiting the number of warheads on mobile ICBMs.

Shevardnadze: We made a good proposal on this issue. Our former position was 1,600 units. Now we are proposing 1,200. However, the U.S. proposal of 800 units is not fair.

Baker: We met you halfway. Before we had no position at all.

Gorbachev: We need to find a compromise solution.

Baker: Between 1,200 and 800.

We also would like to find a solution on the issue of limits on flight testing of heavy missiles. You know our former position on this issue. You rejected it. But we have to show something to Congress.

Shevardnadze: The United States currently proposes to limit the number of flight tests to two per year, and in addition to that the Soviet Union would be required to stop production of such ICBMs by 1993. If the U.S. insists on this proposal, this could negate all our work. As far as the issue of heavy ICBMs is concerned, we have already made all the concessions that we could have made.

Akhromeyev: This issue was resolved in the Washington statement at the highest level.

Gorbachev: Our work is not finished with this treaty. The next stage will involve the solution of more difficult tasks. And then we would be able to consider many issues, including those related to the heavy ICBMs, MIRVs, mobile ICBMs and so on.

Baker: If we agree that the treaty does not stipulate limits on the production of the heavy ICBMs, then we probably have a right to count on you to move toward our position on the issue of test flights to some extent.

Gorbachev: This is beyond the limits of this treaty. Right now we are not prepared to tell you anything on this issue. It would only slow down our work. I do not know, maybe to some extent, the statement about future negotiations and strategic stability would "swallow" this issue, and would give you something with which you can go back to Washington. But right now we are not ready to solve this issue, it would only complicate everything.

Baker: I promised to think about your proposal to restate the Washington formula on inspections in the statement on SLCMs. Maybe you could think of a

different version that would move toward our position on the issue of test flights for heavy ICBMs.

Gorbachev: I think these are two different issues. We are now seeing outlines of a statement about future negotiations and strategic stability, and I think that at the second stage of our negotiations, we could very well discuss heavy ICBMs. I do not see [any] connection with the issue of SLCMs.

Baker: I did not imply that there was a connection. I would like to hope that before my departure from Moscow we would be able to resolve the two remaining issues relating to SLCMs, and that way the issues of SLCMs and ALCMs would be removed. Without [any] connection with these issues, we have concerns about the issue of heavy ICBMs. I told Minister Shevardnadze yesterday that our initial position, which is still on the table of negotiations in Geneva, presupposed cessation of testing, production and modernization of such missiles. We dropped it and asked only to set a limit—two flight tests per year and cessation of production in 1993. In the course of the negotiations, I realized that the position of ceasing production is impassable. All right. Now I am only asking for one thing: consider whether you can accept any wording in the treaty that would limit the scope of testing of these highly destabilizing missiles.

Gorbachev: As I understand, the discussion of strategic offensive forces problems will continue. It seems we did some good work and made some decisions. I want to thank all the participants of this discussion.

Baker: Thank you, Mr. President.

(After talks with the delegations, the conversation was continued once again one-on-one.)

Baker: I would like to thank you for your time and attention. I appreciate it, and the President appreciates it.

I would like to bring up the Lithuania issue. It has been repeatedly discussed between us; we had extensive conversations with E. A. Shevardnadze on this problem. As I told him, we tried to influence the Lithuanians through indirect channels, to get them to take a more moderate position. We said the same thing to our allies. At the same time as I was talking with E.A. Shevardnadze, we had indirect contact with Landsbergis.

It so happened historically that our countries have different positions on this issue. At his last press conference, President Bush acknowledged that this problem is creating some tension. That is why we really wanted the Lithuanians to put their decisions on hold on their own initiative and agree to come to Moscow to start negotiations.

We put pressure on the Lithuanians but at the same time refrained from certain concrete steps that Congress would have liked to impose on us.

As I said to Shevardnadze, today I have to meet with Prunskiene. I simply cannot renege on this meeting because the President received her at the White House. I will say the same thing to her that we conveyed to them by other channels: they should suspend their declaration of independence, come to Moscow and open a dialogue. I would like to ask you: if they take this path, can we expect

a dialogue? I am sure that should a dialogue begin, especially before our next summit, it would greatly improve the atmosphere for your meeting with President Bush. Such is political reality, it is necessary to take it into account.

Gorbachev: Yesterday N.I. Ryzhkov and I met with Prunskiene.

Baker: I know about this.

Gorbachev: I must say that our platform for maneuvering is limited. It takes a great deal of skill to execute a broad maneuver on this rather limited platform. I won't lay it out for you in detail. We are still committed to a political settlement of this problem. Yesterday we agreed that she will try to get a resolution at the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania to freeze the implementation of Lithuania's Independence Act.

Baker: And she agreed?

Gorbachev: Yes, she will try to get it done. The situation is currently pushing us and them towards a resolution. I told her that the Congress of People's Deputies adopted a resolution, declaring the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania's decisions invalid. For me as President, these decisions simply do not exist. However, I told her that I will try to make the argument, though it will be difficult, that the decision to freeze [the Act] is viable and enables us to start a dialogue. I have to tell you that the overwhelming majority here is not prepared to accept this and is insisting on introducing presidential rule. So we will have to prove that this approach is acceptable.

At the same time I told her that she will have to do some work to prove that the present resolution is the best possible and viable compromise. I told her: if you had to rescind the Independence Act, you would be accused of letting Moscow bring you to your knees. If, however, you freeze its implementation, then you can say that the Act still exists, but is not being implemented.

All told, we spoke until 11 p.m. last night, and in the end she said that she will try to get it done. If the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania accepts such a decision, we will immediately create working groups and begin negotiations on all issues. The economic sanctions will be lifted and a normal process will get underway.

Baker: If the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania votes to freeze their declaration but at the same time it will remain as a declaration of intent, you will accept it?

Gorbachev: That problem is somewhat different. We are talking about freezing this declaration and beginning a discussion with the Center regarding realizing the Lithuanian people's right to self-determination.

I told her it is entirely possible that we may be able to work out single, common position. At the same time it is also possible this won't happen and we will have a referendum, with the Center's opinion on one side, and the Lithuanian opinion on the other. If the people decide to leave the Soviet Union, then we will begin the process of division. This won't be a simple task.

For example, a few days ago a delegation of ethnic Poles came to Moscow and declared that in the case of Lithuania's secession they would like to join with the Russian Federation. Approximately 500,000 Russians and Belarusians live in Lithuania. If the American administration goes to such great lengths to rescue

any American from trouble, then how do you expect us to act? It is likely that a significant portion of Russians will want to leave Lithuania and return to the Soviet Union. This also needs to be resolved. Remember that France gave Caledonia 10 years for divorce proceedings.

There will be a great number of economic problems, a complex intertwining of economic concerns. We will have to agree on the format of economic relations. Military, defense questions. We have missiles there. This all needs to be resolved. That is why we are inviting them to have a normal constitutional process.

Lithuania has always been connected to Russia, its market has always been here. But we won't impose anything on them. If they want to leave, that's their right. But you have to do things considerately, taking all problems into account. For instance, it turns out that in 1940 Stalin gave a few regions of Byelorussia to Lithuania. Now Byelorussians are demanding the return of their land.

Baker: When I was speaking to Congress I specifically mentioned the fact that Vilnius was not part of Lithuania until 1940.

Gorbachev: As well as Klaipeda. Instead of merging it with Kaliningrad Oblast, Stalin gave it to Lithuania. As for the Byelorussians, they say their republic suffered from the Chernobyl disaster. Many districts of Gomel Oblast had to be resettled due to the radioactive fallout. Even now they want to use the former Byelorussian regions to settle their citizens there. They adopted a resolution, which we tried to keep under wraps by the way, but they made it public it themselves.

I told Prunskiene yesterday: look at this mess you've made.

We are in favor of giving Lithuania economic and political autonomy, with the possibility of choosing a special status, such as a confederate. But at the same time all the issues must be resolved—humanitarian, territorial, etc. We will seek a solution for this problem. We will do everything we can to untangle this knot to everyone's best interests.

Baker: Do you think that she will succeed in convincing the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania?

Gorbachev: I think she will. There is already a split among them.

Baker: On Brazauskas' side?

Gorbachev: Yes.

We appreciate your position and your determination to help us find a way out of this situation. Right now it is important to show restraint. We will see how events unfold. Recently some comrades visited rural regions of Lithuania and saw that people there do not support the separatists. They are happy with the current situation; they receive concentrates from the Center, the existing network. I think this is why the Lithuanian leadership is afraid of a referendum.

Baker: Only 40 percent of the population voted for the current Supreme Soviet.

Gorbachev: Exactly. So, we will untangle this knot.

You have to understand that we could have taken a completely different route and acted more harshly, if we ourselves hadn't been the initiators of the

democratization and reform process in our country. I'm under tremendous pressure; I'm getting telegrams with demands to take decisive action. I'm being told: look at what the American president does to protect his citizens! I'm going to show your President these telegrams.

We are firmly committed to our line and we are committed to a political settlement of this problem.

Baker: We wish you success in this and all of your efforts. I would like to affirm once again that the President and I support you, support *perestroika*, and we will act accordingly.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 20, pp. 13–29. Translated by Anna Melyakova, Svetlana Savranskaya, and Chris Johnson.]

Document No. 96: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the President:
“Scope Paper—The Gorbachev Summit”

Late May 1990

On the eve of the summit, the U.S. national security adviser places the issues to be discussed into the context of the “declining economy, political polarization and ethnic strife” afflicting the Soviet Union, and Gorbachev’s need for external support. Scowcroft encourages Bush to treat Gorbachev as an equal and a leader of a great power, but he does not advocate for any actual assistance. The memorandum outlines where Bush could persuade Gorbachev to move even closer to the U.S. position and away from supporting his allies in the Third World. The priority is to persuade Gorbachev to acquiesce on the German issue, “making absolutely clear that full German membership in NATO is not negotiable,” even while bearing in mind the sensitivity of the issue for the Soviet population. Scowcroft notes that Gorbachev is now prepared to ask directly for economic assistance whereas earlier the Soviets “pridefully” avoided the topic and spoke only about equal trade and economic relations. To get aid, however, Scowcroft believes Gorbachev would have to make more concessions because it is inconceivable that Congress would act “while Moscow supports Cuba, blockades Lithuania and opposes German membership in NATO.”

In the last few days, you have heard scholars of the Soviet Union give very different assessments of the severity of Moscow’s problems. My view is that while the Soviet Union is not in danger of imminent collapse, the now familiar list of woes—the declining economy, political polarization and ethnic strife to name a few—have most certainly seriously worsened since Gorbachev’s meeting with you at Malta. More importantly, Gorbachev is increasingly blamed personally for the chaotic state of affairs by a population that values order above all else.

The Soviet leadership faces critical decisions this summer concerning the Soviet Union’s political and economic future. The Communist Party could split at the Party Congress in July, launching the Soviet Union on the road to a multi-party system; challenges will increase from rebellious republics; and the leadership will submit its economic program to a national referendum in hopes of finally gaining political legitimacy to launch desperately needed reform measures. Gorbachev is a leader with much on his mind and far more than at Malta, Soviet internal difficulties will be the backdrop for your meeting with him.

Given his domestic difficulties, you will want to reassure Gorbachev that you continue to support him and are committed to maintaining a cooperative U.S.-Soviet relationship. But he must also understand that your support for perestroika is not unconditional. In this regard, you should explain why his policy toward the Baltic States, which is a departure from the principles that he himself set forth for perestroika, has had a negative impact on the relationship. You will want to

reiterate with him the critical link between continued reform in the Soviet Union, a forthcoming Soviet foreign policy—particularly regarding Germany—and further improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations.

This Summit also gives you an opportunity to move toward closure on several of the essential agreements that would codify the gains of the last year. The most important of these is to complete the unification of Germany and assure its continued full membership in NATO. You need to seek to persuade Gorbachev to—at a minimum—acquiesce in German membership in NATO. But if in the long-run that proves to be impossible for him, you will want to have established a clear record—particularly with the German public—of reasonable attempts to take into account Soviet concerns. With Gorbachev it will be important to show that you understand the sensitivity of the German problem for the Soviet Union while making absolutely clear that full German membership in NATO is not negotiable.

Moscow's concern over its deteriorating security position in Europe has stirred contradictory impulses in the Soviet leadership concerning CFE. On the one hand, the Soviets know that a CFE accord is a precondition for the CSCE Summit that they so want. But at the same time, the fact that the Soviet security situation has shifted dramatically since CFE began has apparently led the leadership to reassess precisely what it wants and needs from a CFE agreement. The CFE negotiations need a political push from Gorbachev in order to resolve the outstanding issues. You will want to impress upon Gorbachev that CFE is the most important building block of a new Europe—one that will bring the military situation on the continent into line with the new political realities. Similarly, you may want to press Gorbachev on "Open Skies," reiterating once again the importance—symbolically and in reality—of a regime committed to openness and transparency about military activities.

In addition to trying to bring to closure these key issues on Europe, this is a good time to engage Gorbachev on Afghanistan and perhaps on Cuban assistance to the FMLN in El Salvador. The Soviets are not prepared to abandon their allies precipitously but as the domestic situation worsens they will face ever harder choices about their foreign policy adventures. Gorbachev should understand that regional conflicts can still have a negative effect on the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship and that their solution—as in the case of Nicaragua—makes it easier for you to support perestroika.

Finally, Gorbachev will undoubtedly place high priority on economic matters. Should you decide not to sign the trade agreement because of Soviet policy in Lithuania, there will be some awkwardness in exploring the future of U.S.-Soviet economic relations. Nonetheless, you will have the chance to hear Gorbachev detail his economic reform program and to discuss the many economic agreements that will be signed at the Summit.

In conversations with Helmut Kohl and Jim Baker, Gorbachev has signaled his intention to seek economic assistance from the West. The exact form of the assistance that he seeks is not clear. You should be aware of how significant a

departure this step entails for Gorbachev. The Soviets have pridefully refused to ask for “assistance” or “help” in undertaking perestroika. You will remember Shevardnadze’s comment that talk of economic help “offends Soviet sensibilities and that this possibility did not come up at Malta.” If in fact he does request direct assistance, it will be important for you to tell Gorbachev honestly that your ability to assist the Soviet economy depends in large part on whether Moscow is ready to take further steps that support Western interests, especially concerning Germany and total Soviet military withdrawal from Eastern Europe. It is inconceivable that Congress would appropriate funds for the Soviet Union while Moscow supports Cuba, blockades Lithuania and opposes German membership in NATO.

The Soviet Union is a great power and has said to now that it wished only to engage in equal commercial and economic relations with other states. That Moscow is contemplating an appeal to the West for help is a measure of the leadership’s own sense of a deepening economic crisis. One of the consequences of that state of mind may be a need to demonstrate that the Soviet Union’s superpower status is in tact [sic] and—for Gorbachev personally—to show that he is your equal. A chronic sense of inferiority has always driven the Soviets (and the Russian tsars before them) to insist on equality and reciprocity in dealings with foreign governments—particularly the United States. In the current circumstances, where nothing seems to be going right for Moscow, you may find that desire for at least the appearance of equality exaggerated. More than anything, Gorbachev will want to avoid any suggestion that he and his country are on their last legs.

This Summit allows Gorbachev to demonstrate that whatever the state of affairs at home—his foreign policy is moving forward. For that reason if no other, the Soviets will come to this Summit trying to show that the U.S.-Soviet relationship, the centerpiece of the new foreign policy, is alive and well.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2008-0824-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 97: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Kohl, 7:34 a.m. – 7:43 a.m.

May 30, 1990

*The West German chancellor rings up President Bush before Gorbachev's arrival in Washington for the summit to urge him to make three points to the Soviet leader. The first is that Bush and Kohl have a firm joint position on the "future membership of a united Germany in NATO without any limitations." The second is that Kohl believes it is possible to "find a sensible economic arrangement" with Gorbachev—meaning major West German financial aid and credits—because he "needs help very much." Third, "it is of immense importance that we make further progress in disarmament." (Interestingly, in the Bush-Scowcroft version of this conversation in their joint memoir, *A World Transformed* (p. 278), Kohl's third point about disarmament is left out altogether. On Gorbachev's need for financial aid, the president is circumspect, commenting only: "I remember your private conversation with me. ... We have problems with that, related to Lithuania." The U.S. is running its own budget deficit, and Bush has no intention of providing major financial support to Gorbachev—that would be up to Kohl.*

The President: Helmut!

Chancellor Kohl: Good morning! How are you?

The President: I am getting ready for the big visit. I am glad to hear your voice.

Chancellor Kohl: That is why I am calling. I wanted to exchange views for a couple of minutes. One thing, George: you can rely on our fullest support. I acknowledge very much what you have done for us and appreciate your friendship and reliability. One thing that is very important for Gorbachev to understand is that irrespective of developments, we will stand side by side. And one sign of this cooperation are the links between us by the future membership of a united Germany in NATO without any limitations. You should make this clear to him, but in a friendly way, and also make it clear that is the view I hold. There should be no doubt about that. A second point: we can find a sensible economic arrangement with him. He needs help very much. He should also know that we have no intention of profiting from his weakness. A final point: it is of immense importance that we make further progress in disarmament.

The President: I appreciate your comments very much. On the German Question, as it is called, I don't expect much breakthrough. I won't change my views, but I will assure him we are side by side. We will layout our views on the Two Plus Four, including the need to terminate Four Power rights at the time of unification, with no new constraints on German sovereignty. We want him to come out feeling he has had a good Summit, even though there are no

major breakthroughs. I think we can do it. We have a wide range of agreements to sign. On the economic side, I remember your private conversation with me. Subsequently, that has been raised, with Jim Baker. We have problems with that, related to Lithuania. But I will take your advice. I don't want him to think we are taking advantage of him because of his weakness. We will move the arms control agenda forward, but he must realize that on conventional forces, those are Alliance decisions. We can talk about this in general terms, but on matters like the levels of German forces, beyond those already on the table, we cannot make commitments. We really appreciated your offer to help on levels of the *Bundeswehr*, but we feel it is a little premature. Brent Scowcroft has gotten to Horst Teltschik on that. But it was a very generous offer on your part.

Chancellor Kohl: George, to make this very clear: the wind blew some rumors my way, and I instructed Teltschik to approach Brent Scowcroft. I said we can discuss everything, but we have to agree beforehand before we reach agreement. Nothing is going to change on that. You can rely on it.

The President: Good. I think we are up to date. I look forward to seeing you next week.

Chancellor Kohl: I am very much looking forward to it.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library.]

Document No. 98: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Gorbachev,
First Private Meeting, Washington, 10:54 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

May 31, 1990

In his memoir (p. 279), Bush describes the first one-on-one meeting in the Oval Office (with Scowcroft, Chernyaev and translators present) as “largely philosophical, the kind each of us had hoped to have at Malta.” This first conversation of the summit goes significantly longer than planned, forcing the delay of the first plenary session, but the tone between the leaders is strikingly direct and candid. They assure each other of their commitment to cooperation and further arms control negotiations. Bush draws Gorbachev’s attention to the situation in Lithuania and how difficult it is for him politically to sustain support for perestroika while Moscow pressures Lithuania to stay in the Soviet Union. Bush says he will try to continue to show patience, but he mentions that Lithuanian opposition leaders are comparing him to Neville Chamberlain, the appeaser of Hitler, “for supporting you [Gorbachev] and not the great American principles of democracy and freedom.” In the discussion of economic reform, Gorbachev tells Bush that the Soviets are not ready yet for a market economy and will need two years for transition. Bush compares this to being “pregnant: you can’t do it half-way,” to which Gorbachev presciently replies: “But neither can you have a baby in the first month. We want to avoid an abortion.”

The President: Welcome. We can open with anything you wish. We want this meeting to be seen as successful. We will try hard for a sense of success to present to the outside world. One more thing: we have this meeting, then expanded meetings, then Camp David, with you and me, then Baker and Shevardnadze. I think the private sessions will be most remunerative. There should be no press and no leaks. That is how I see it unfolding.

President Gorbachev: My sincere greetings. It is good to be here in the White House. I am not a diplomat—you have studied me—I have no intention of becoming one. I believe the current time is such that we need to understand each other and to develop policies with respect to each other, and to others, which are predictable. I share your approach to this meeting. It should have a positive result. I am sure we can achieve that.

I think our colleagues can complete the reviewing work. Our mission is to complete the philosophical discussion on issues we discussed even in 1987 and then at Malta. We said in the former meeting that if you were elected we would want to continue the work begun with President Reagan, and we took a further step at Governors Island. Then, I believe we did the right thing at Malta by not waiting for a formal meeting.

I would like to salute you. After Malta, events were developing, and they could have gone differently without Malta and the understandings we reached

there. The processes continue, putting an even heavier load on us. That makes this meeting even more important. Let me make several points to begin our philosophical exchange. I think you agree that the center of world politics is the Soviet Union. What happens there is of monumental importance for you and the world. I value the positions you have stuck to. I know it is not easy, as it is not easy for me.

While giving credit to our predecessors, we have to accept that we have a special task at this watershed in history. We cannot avoid that responsibility. The fact that we are using all forms of dialogue is appropriate. Let me outline the first point of my thoughts; these have not changed basically since the Reagan period.

First, since we are in a radically new phase of our relations, we need a radically different view of, and approach to, each other. You may or may not agree, but the confrontation we got into after World War II wasted our time and energy, while others—the former vanquished—were moving ahead. Now they (the vanquished) are behaving very arrogantly. Japan's empire is now extending to you, to us, and to Western Europe. Germany likewise is a very powerful center in Europe and areas around Europe. Even countries like China and India in the developing world are moving. The world is changing in dramatic ways. The U.S. alone, despite its power, can not lead the world by itself. Playing "cards" against each other is not the way to go.

What kind of country would each like the other to be? We don't want a weaker U.S. with infringed interests—this would create instability—and in U.S. political circles it is gradually becoming popular to see a stronger but democratic Soviet Union developing. Perestroika is how we hope to make that happen. We are moving toward a Soviet Union that is progressive, dynamic, free and turned toward the outside world and the U.S. If you analyze our statements and our initiative, you will see that we are not trying to infringe upon U.S. interests, especially security.

This is our choice, and we are trying to get all sectors of Soviet society to accept this. It is not easy, but we are making progress. As a result, the image of the U.S. as a hostile and aggressive power is fading. But, realistically—I must be honest—every day I get reports; there are many in the Soviet Union telling me the U.S. is continuing to move and is trying to take advantage of perestroika to seek unilateral advantage. That is not surprising; you must have the same kind of people.

The President: Why do your people think this way in a period of budget cuts and so forth?

President Gorbachev: Public opinion as a whole is supportive and backs our policy. But at the same time some signal vigilance and are suspicious, for example war veterans, the military, and also the military/industrial complex. On balance, most want a good relationship and are for expanding cooperation. I believe our policy will be getting more and more support, but our people will follow very closely the steps taken by the U.S., especially in the security field. Let me conclude on this first point. I think we should build on what we have started, keep

it going, and accelerate it. People in the Soviet Union will judge your policy by your attitudes towards perestroika and towards trade and finance.

The most harmful thing right now as our system is moving to open up is that there is not fair play. That could lead to a reversion to old ways, a sliding back from the ambitious policies we want to pursue. I say this because some in your press say that Gorbachev is weak and you should press your advantage. I am glad you have taken a firm policy line in favor of better relations and support of perestroika. That was in the U.S. interest, but I want you to know we appreciate it and I am sure the world does as well. As we take steps in various areas that will stimulate more contact and a better interrelationship, I have told international business that those who are with us now will be remembered, and those who stayed on the sidelines will lose out in the long run.

This is a central point in my observations. All other points are subsidiary, so I would like to re-emphasize it. There is a regrouping in the world, and U.S.-Soviet relations are vital in this process—the question is, can we cooperate? When we do, people feel better, except for fears of condominium; but when we quarrel, people worry. Our conduct thus far has avoided the condominium idea. We cannot freeze our relations, however; we must move forward or we will fall behind.

The President: I am most worried that we will not have enough time. This is fascinating. We need time, because under these philosophical points lie many specific issues.

There is a significant change in U.S. attitudes toward the Soviet Union, although there is emerging suspicion. I was looking at some polls; they show strong personal support of you. This is partly because of the way you personally interact, but also because you have done things which only recently would have been impossible for Americans to contemplate.

You wondered at Governors Island whether there were elements that wanted perestroika to fail. I said that, if so, it was very much a minority view; it is even more so today. We do have elements, in my party, who are still suspicious and don't want to deal from equality and mutual respect. They are a small minority. We do not intend, either directly or indirectly, to play "cards" against you: China, India, etc. That is offensive to me, and I will not engage in it. Our people are probably not sufficiently sensitive, for example, to Soviet losses in World War II.

As we wrestle with arms control, not only have I become more sensitive to that issue, but all my people have as well. We are attuned to that driving point for the Soviet Union, the fact that so many lost their lives. I wanted to get that comment on the table before we get—inevitably—to Germany, so you would know that I am sensitive to that historical fact.

We do not want winners and losers. I wrote into my arrival comments the disproportionate responsibility that the Americans and the Soviets have for world structure. We respect the standing of the Soviet Union. Yes, you have problems, but you should understand that as long as I am in this office there will be no attempt to downgrade the position which the Soviet Union rightly occupies. You must believe my sincerity on this point as we get into detailed issues. You gave

me that map at Malta with the blue flags. I asked the CIA to see how accurate your intelligence was. They gave you high marks.

President Gorbachev: I am sure your data on us is even better, because your technology is better.

The President: But you get it all from Congress.

President Gorbachev: Not all.

The President: I told Brent that we have to convince you that these flags don't mean that we are trying to surround, to encircle the Soviet Union. Some of it we can do by words; some must be by actions. The U.S. has not been a historic threat to the Soviet Union, nor vice versa. Problems arose only when the Cold War developed.

I would like to go back to your first point. Obviously our commitment to democracy and freedom is well known. As we adhere to those principles, we are not trying to complicate life for the Soviet Union.

There are several problems we need to discuss, here or in a bigger meeting—however you wish. Germany heads the list of difficult questions. CFE is very important, and maybe we can make progress. I understand you have hangups there which tie into the German problem. We don't want a Soviet Union that is threatened by any power. We may have very different ideas about the future of Germany. Will they return to their old ways, or have they learned and paid their dues? I am of the latter view. I think that, after 40 years, Germany is different now. But I wouldn't want to see a Soviet Union threatened by some new force. Nor do I want to single out Germany in a way which threatens to make history repeat itself.

The last point I would make is that I am respectful of the internal affairs of another country, and I know the Lithuanian problem is extraordinarily difficult. We are looking at your economic reforms to see how they will help cooperation and deepen our relationship. Gorbachev has 70% approval in U.S. opinion polls because Americans are saluting what you are doing. We want these trends to continue—we relate to all that—but that is entirely your business.

We visualize a Soviet Union which does not seek regional gains. If you see us doing things like putting in a radical Afghan regime which seems to be against your interests, that is bad. The same is true for us with respect to Cuba.

My last point brings us back to the Baltics. To the degree that we see a commitment to your own principles of self-determination, we can cooperate. I have tried to conduct myself in a constrained way because I know you have big problems. But I am being hit both on my left and on my right by those who say that I am subordinating U.S. dedication to principle. I will be honest: some of Landsbergis' moves could look to you like putting a finger in your eye.

President Gorbachev: When I have wanted to speak in strong terms on this issue, I have said that Bush would settle this in 24 hours, because in the U.S. the Constitution is respected. The pre-perestroika leadership did not have respect for our Constitution, so the people don't. Now we are moving to become a people with respect for laws.

The President: I understand, but you saw Landsbergis equating me with Chamberlain because I showed too much understanding of your position. I am getting into too much detail, but I see a world in which these fundamental principles continue to be worked out in your country. We need to work together.

One last point. You mentioned the arrogance of some nations. In some of our speeches we too may seem that way, although I think we are not. Many in the U.S. think the Japanese are that way, but it is in the U.S. and Soviet interest that we work together with Japan. I have recently come to that point of view, although in the war I was shot down by the Japanese. What I see is a Soviet Union which can shed its historic fears, just as the U.S. is shedding its historic fears of Japan.

This is the end of my speech. I am not sure I have covered your points well; if not, we can continue.

President Gorbachev: I welcome this kind of discussion. Let me take five minutes more. (Continues, despite General Scowcroft's discouragement.) The phase of perestroika that we are now going through is probably decisive. Our political system has changed in a decisive way. In the elected bodies, all the way up, we have totally new people. Those functions which were the province of the party are now done by the Supreme Soviets. This is now formalized in constitutions and in local government statutes.

Looking at our union, we are now in the actual process of reforming that federation. Now we have adopted measures, which now means we must implement them. This means more self-government, etc. I sent a letter to the Council of Federations to prepare for a discussion of all this, to rebuild our federation. The difficulties will be fundamental. Different Republics may have different relationships, but our basic decision is for a free market economy.

Two thirds of the speakers at the Ryzhkov plan's presentation were negative, but the next day it was 50-50. Some started to comment on the positive aspects and on how to improve them. I was in the country, but thought I should talk to the people. So I dictated something and then talked simply and directly. I think people are beginning to understand what it means, the market. I said that those who work hard and put out quality products will profit by markets. Others will have to change so as not to be left behind. I said, let's organize a market economy—so the next day the Supreme Soviet debate was very different. They even took the notion of a referendum off the table by a 3-1 margin. They decided that the government and the parliamentary committees will work on it together for a week and try to come together. We are not ready yet for a market economy. We have a centralized economy and we must take account of this as we move. It seems easy to you.

The President: I see. But it's like being pregnant: you can't do it half-way.

President Gorbachev: But neither can you have a baby in the first month. We want to avoid an abortion. We are beginning with bread because it was so distorted. I am trying to get people to understand, and it is beginning to work. We need about two years for the transition. Kendall wants to tell the two of us how to interact on this. I told him to find a time.

The President: He will be here tonight; I am drinking his vodka.

President Gorbachev: For us, the decisive issue is the transition to a market economy. We hope to interact with you at this moment.

The President: We should talk about the practical end of it. Jim has described your talk with him. We have differences, but let's talk about them.

President Gorbachev: We need maneuvering room during this transition. The sums are not very big, but it is important that they be available. The U.S. would not need to provide it all, but you should be supportive. It is important that we not fail in this effort.

The President: I agree, but you must know about my political constraints. At the plenary, I will call on you to discuss what you wish and we will go on from there. I have no surprises.

President Gorbachev: Good.

The President: Our Vice President is very well connected to our right wing. He has had a difficult time with our press, but he can be very helpful with arms control, etc. I wanted him to be involved as much as possible for that reason, and I would like to have him join us for a moment.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0841-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 99: Record of Conversation between
Gorbachev and Bush, Washington, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

May 31, 1990

In this famous “two anchor” discussion, the U.S. and Soviet delegations deliberate over the process of German unification and especially the issue of a united Germany joining NATO. Bush tries to persuade his counterpart to reconsider his fears of Germany based on the past, and to encourage him to trust the new democratic Germany. Baker repeats the nine assurances made previously by the administration (see Document No. 95), including that the United States now agrees to support the pan-European process and transformation of NATO in order to remove the Soviet perception of threat. Gorbachev’s preferred position is Germany with one foot in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact—the “two anchors”—creating a kind of associated membership. Baker intervenes, saying that “the simultaneous obligations of one and the same country toward the WTO and NATO smack of schizophrenia.” After the U.S. president frames the issue in the context of the Helsinki agreement, Gorbachev proposes that the German people have the right to choose their alliance—which he in essence already affirmed to Kohl during their meeting in February 1990. Here, Gorbachev significantly exceeds his brief, and incurs the ire of other members of his delegation, especially the official with the German portfolio, Valentin Falin, and Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev. Gorbachev issues a key warning about the future: “if the Soviet people get an impression that we are disregarded in the German question, then all the positive processes in Europe, including the negotiations in Vienna [over conventional forces], would be in serious danger. This is not just bluffing. It is simply that the people will force us to stop and to look around.” It is a remarkable admission about domestic political pressures from the last Soviet leader.

[...] Gorbachev. Thank you for the warm greetings. As I can see, there are familiar faces around this table, and this is also a good sign.

Today, in our one-on-one conversation we remembered our first meeting, when you were Vice-President, and I would like to stress in the presence of all our colleagues, that the constructive impulse, which was born then, did not die, but to the contrary, was enriched with new energy. Sometimes it happens that with a change of a political position, intentions and practical actions change radically. Fortunately, your example, Mr. President, is of a different nature. You used the new opportunities to fill out your principled positions with practical content. It is especially important if one considers that you became President of the most powerful nation in the world—United States of America.

The combination of the realistic principles and practical approaches opened new favorable opportunities for the Soviet-American cooperation. This is the moment of great importance, because we are talking about contacts between leaders of two great powers that bear special responsibility for the global

developments and which play, without exaggeration, a historic role in the international arena.

Starting from the valuable experience of joint work that we accumulated, I would like to express hope that this meeting will be substantive and will enable us to arrive at common understandings on big issues. And here the atmosphere of mutual understanding and good working relations that characterizes the contacts of our foreign ministers and all of those individuals whose efforts allowed us to make significant steps toward each other will help us.

In other words, our relations are distinguished by the quality, which allows us to discuss the most difficult issues and to not avoid the most acute problems.

This is the first statement of fact. The second moment that we should mention is related to our morning one-on-one conversation. It went overtime, but the President and I did not notice the passing of the time. I asked my interlocutor to share his opinion on the main issue: how do they in America, in the American leadership would like to see the Soviet Union, and how do they see the future of Soviet-American relations through the prism of U.S. national interests.

It sounds like this question belongs to the philosophical category, but we live in the period, in which a lack of philosophy and even more so poverty of philosophy would inevitably affect practical policies.

I was deeply satisfied with the agreement that I felt on the main issue—in the epoch of deep changes, when entire Europe started moving, the Soviet Union is changing beyond recognition, and whatever they say, changes are taking place even in the United States—the Soviet-American interaction is an irreplaceable factor of predictability and stability. Such a conclusion is not idealism, not an effort to paint over differences and concerns, which, by the way, were mentioned today during the greeting ceremony at the White House. Such interaction is a source of confident development of both of our states with their great potential and specific problems.

Of course, you know your problems better, but I think we also have common concerns. In particular, I said that we are witnessing a certain paradoxical situation, when countries defeated in World War Two are starting to get ahead of us in the most important sphere of human development. It is as if they leave it to us to carry the burden of competition, of running the arms race. Some side maneuvers are clearly visible already.

And now, unfortunately, forces emerged in our own countries who cling to the inertia of competition, who do not want to break the stereotypes of animosity.

However, thanks to God and to our own joint efforts, we were able to break out of the vicious circle, to start breaking the structures of confrontation, to translate good intentions into real actions.

Yes, the President reserved a detailed conversation on this topic, but even from what I have already heard, I could see how the understanding of the need for Soviet-American cooperation is growing.

This is very important. And when today we start dealing with concrete problems, this general understanding will have to pass a difficult test.

Going back and taking an inventory of the road traveled so far, we inevitably come to one clear conclusion. It is simple and clear. Nothing good will happen in Europe, in international relations as a whole, and even in internal politics if we exclude cooperation—obviously cooperation on the basis of reciprocity—with the U.S. administration.

This truth can be stated in a different way—it is in our own interest to avoid hurting U.S. interests so that our American partners would not have a reason for a feeling of vulnerability, for suspicions that their security is damaged by the Soviet Union. If we allow this, one can imagine how the United States would react—the same way as we would have reacted ourselves.

Another thing is clear too—that sometimes—such is the human nature—one could be tempted to try to achieve some dividends on their own, for their own interest. I am convinced that if the Soviet or the American leadership would take that approach, it would be the deepest misapprehension. And in this connection I appreciate the clear position of the President and of the Secretary of State, which they took in a difficult situation—difficult not only in the international perspective, but also in terms of the composition of forces in the United States. You emphasized the element of Soviet-American interaction and therefore, not only preserved what was accumulated already, but also created a good capital for further progress.

If we had not established personal contact earlier, if our ministers had no experience of cooperation, and most importantly, if [the] Malta [summit] hadn't taken place, then I am convinced that our countries would not have been prepared for the events in Eastern Europe, and especially in Germany. And that means that we could have made big mistakes. Because during periods of high tension one match could spark a bonfire.

Now we can register the fact that the acute period of cardinal changes proceeded quite calmly in principle, even though the changes themselves sometimes assumed some quite sharp shapes both in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union.

In this connection, I would like to propose to you right away to focus on the picture of the changing Europe and the processes launched by the German unification as one single phenomenon. Because all this is so interconnected that you cannot separate one from another.

Even if you take the strictest criteria, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are changing in the direction of cooperation with other states, they open new parts of themselves to the common human civilization. This is precisely what creates a basis not only for dialogue, but for core changes in the forms of cooperation and leads us right up to the new structures of security in Europe.

I would stress that the main issue is how the process would go in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As far as the problems created by the German unification, they, with all their importance and acuteness—and they do have a global scale—still, they are a phenomenon of a second order.

That is why we should concentrate our efforts on the deepening of the European processes—to determine the necessary sequence of steps and timelines.

We share the U.S. administration's aspiration to achieve a fastest agreement in Vienna, so that it could be signed at the all-European summit.

In addition to everything else, this agreement on stages would allow us to hold a comprehensive discussion about the new tendencies of the European development, to exchange opinions about how to build relations in the new Europe. And here it is absolutely clear that we cannot build a new Europe without an active participation by the United States.

Just as well, nothing good will come out of the attempts to isolate the Soviet Union. Maybe not "isolate" but just to "squelch." If we notice such maneuvers, then, I will say directly, an adequate reaction will follow. This is like in hockey—a puck in one goal leads to the other side's response. And all this in the context of a harsh power game. One should clearly perceive such a prospect.

But I would like to emphasize another thought. We are genuinely ready for a long-term dialogue with the United States in all directions of global politics. The logic of events itself brought us to this conclusion—because it is precisely through this cooperation that our two countries would get the best chance to have a positive impact on the ongoing rapid changes.

Europe should now move forward without stopping—increasing the tempo, making an accent from Helsinki-1 to Helsinki-2. Here, in my view, we have a good understanding. However, the moment of truth has come: how do we combine further all-European process with a fair resolution of the external issues, which emerged as a result of German unification? Combine in such a way, so that this powerful promising tendency toward growing European cooperation would not fizzle.

There are several options here, including the familiar one, which you are trying to push through with such persistence. But in truth, I still do not believe that it is your only option. In my opinion, there can be no president who does not have a reserve on such an important issue.

On my part, I am ready to suggest three or four alternative solutions. However, let's have our ministers deal with the concrete issues—they are very good at it.

I would like to pose the big question, the principal question—the stakes are too high; what is happening in the world now and in our relations is too important to allow ourselves to stumble on one, even a super-complex problem. We will not be forgiven for such a retreat, they will ask how come that presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union did not have enough good will and imagination at the key moment. All this is so serious that right now the entire world is literally looking at our approaches and concrete positions with a microscope.

Here it is so important to come to an agreement that authorship of a compromise does not matter—whether it would be proposed by Bush or Gorbachev, Scowcroft or Akhromeyev. The main thing is that the proposed version of a solution should be adequate for the constructive vector of the all-European process, that it would encourage strengthening of trust and would not become a stick in the wheel of the cart.

I think there is [a] real [possibility] to find such a solution model for the external aspects of German unification that would not only not undermine, but to the contrary, would strengthen positive tendencies in the Soviet-American dialogue in Europe and in the entire world as well. A model that would include some length of time and that would be synchronized with the European processes. Then, after going through a transition period, we would arrive at some new structure of relations in Europe, including the relations in the sphere of security.

During such a period, it would be necessary to quickly change the nature of the opposing blocs, to transform them from military [blocs] into primarily political organizations. In our view, such positive intentionality would be solidified by some kind of agreement between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO.

Parallel to that you could come up with an initiative directed toward reform of the NATO doctrine, and the Soviet Union would bring its concrete military structures in accordance with its new defensive doctrine. We could develop exchanges between headquarters, and we could jointly discuss the levels of armed forces of the future united Germany. Simultaneously, we could raise the more general questions related to interaction of security structures of the USSR and the USA.

Finally, such a creative approach could also inspire some new options for ensuring the security of united Germany—which would, let us say, stand on two pillars—not only in the West, but also in the East. As a hypothesis I would suggest that it could be some form of associated membership.

I have to admit that the thoughts that the Secretary of State shared with us in Moscow also gave a push to our creativity, which is characterized by a search for mutually beneficial continuous steps. I hope that you also will not let down our hopes and will offer something new. Because if we come to an agreement, then I am confident that the Germans will agree with us.

Bush. Thank you for your explanations. As I understand it, we have some fundamental differences on the German issue. Possibly, the roots of it are in the different historical heritage of the USSR and the USA. Your concern, your mistrust toward a united Germany is too deep, it ignores Germany's last 50 years of experience with democracy.

At the same time, one can understand your fears. We also fought Hitler, but our losses do not stand any comparison with the 27 million Soviet lives sacrificed in the armed struggle with Nazi Germany.

And yet, as it seems to me, our approach to Germany is more realistic, and has better timing because the processes of German unification are unfolding faster than any of us could have imagined, and there is no force that can put a brake on them. That is why the mistrust oriented toward the past is an especially bad adviser here.

It seems to me that our approach to Germany as to a close friend is more pragmatic and constructive, although, I have to tell you honestly, it is not shared by everybody in the West. Some West Europeans, just like you, do not trust either Germany or Germans as a whole. However, we all in the West are united in one [concern]: the main danger lies in separating Germany from the community

of democratic states, in trying to impose some special status and humiliating conditions on her. It is precisely this kind of development of events that could lead to a revival of German militarism and revanchism—which is exactly the concern you have.

It seems to me that without forgetting about those violations of human rights that took place in Nazi Germany, we have to at the same time take into consideration her recent democratic experience, and start from the notion that Germans deserve their respected and equal place in the family of democratic nations.

Thus, to sum it up, I wanted to say that we approach Germany from different positions, although the [recent] transformations, as you pointed out correctly, are now changing the faces of both the Soviet Union and the United States, being in direct contradiction with the established stereotypes.

Of course, we do not possess a crystal ball, and we cannot predict the future. However, as far as we can see the nearest future, the biggest evil would be to try to separate united Germany into a special category. Not only West Europeans but also most of the countries of Eastern Europe agree with us on this. At the same time, united Germany should not be anybody's enemy, and the process of incorporating it into the new Europe would stipulate deep involvement of the USSR, and a fair consideration of your country's interests.

And one more question. I think you would after all agree that some U.S. presence in Europe is necessary, even though some people even in the United States itself are inclined to a different point of view. They complain about the disproportionately big burden in defense and economic maintenance of Europe, which Americans had to take upon themselves. However, if we start from the position that prevails in our country, then the U.S. political, economic and military involvement in the life of Europe is indispensable for the security and stability of the entire Old World.

Sometimes people ask me—with tongue in cheek—so who is the enemy of the U.S. in the new, transformed beyond recognition Europe? And I respond with conviction—confusion, instability, unpredictability. As difficult as it could be, I want to assure you that the American presence in Europe does not threaten interests of the Soviet Union in any sense whatsoever. More than that, right now our presence there is a guarantee of stability.

Of course we are acting in the conditions of democracy, and, if the new generation of Germans decides so, we will pull out of Germany. However, today, I reiterate, the mood is completely different. These moods are strengthened by NATO traditions, by many of the chapters of the North Atlantic Treaty. Taking into account everything I said, I am asking you again to overcome your fear of united Germany, and to leave the past behind. On this road you will find in us reliable partners, and together we will be able to show the rest of the world that we are able to rise above selfish interests, that we are working for the common good.

I understand that you will probably find nothing new in my words. But believe me that this is my sincere conviction, and if I am not right, then I am asking you not to hesitate to point out my mistakes to me. I will only add that I am

trying not to rush to conclusions and moreover, not to make any sudden or politically extravagant steps. I remember, when the Berlin Wall fell, my political opponent accused me of cowardice, of not being sufficiently energetic in welcoming that development. However, I took into account your appeal to show caution, to act in a sensitive manner, bearing in mind the fragility of new processes in Europe and in the Soviet Union.

As far as [my response to] my critics, I said then that I did not intend to dance on the ruins of the Berlin Wall like a little boy.

Believe me, we are not pushing Germany toward unification, and it is not us who determines the pace of this process. And of course, we have no intention, even in our thoughts, to harm the Soviet Union in any fashion. That is why we are speaking in favor of German unification in NATO without ignoring the wider context of the CSCE, taking the traditional economic ties between the two German states into consideration. Such a model, in our view, corresponds to the Soviet interests as well. Therefore, I am asking you to point to me where [you think] I am mistaken.

Gorbachev. First of all, I think I understood the main source of your concern. You see the U.S. presence in Europe as a factor of stability, and you are worried about the prospects of its preservation. Well, I already said that now the U.S. presence in Europe is even necessary (what will happen in the future, life will show). I am talking precisely about the military presence, because the U.S. economic and political participation in European affairs is an uncontestable constant.

Europe is the natural center of global politics, and if we allow diversions here, then consequences will be felt throughout the entire world. Soviet-American cooperation represents one of the pillars on which the European political space is resting. That is why we are in favor of taking your interests into account, which means we are in favor of U.S. presence in Europe.

However, you are making a methodological miscalculation when you connect your presence with NATO only, and when you worry that if the FRG pulls out of the North Atlantic Treaty, it would mean the beginning of the end for NATO and therefore the beginning of the end of your military presence on the continent. I do not agree with this conclusion, but I understand your concern. Especially as far as today's reality is concerned—when one probably could not do without NATO anyway.

I also see your efforts to change NATO functions, to try to invite new members into this organization. If the course aimed at the transformation of the union, at its political diffusion into the all-European process is serious, then, naturally, it is a completely different business. But then the question arises about transforming NATO into a genuinely open organization, the door to which could not be closed to any state whatsoever. Then, probably, we could also think about becoming a member of NATO. However, today, honestly speaking, there are very few facts for such a radical conclusion.

Now about another topic. You are extremely concerned about the health of united Germany, from which you calculate the health of NATO. You are so

concerned about it that you forget about the health and interests of the Soviet Union. And this, in turn, does not help either stability or predictability at all.

Instead of fixating on the membership of the future united Germany in NATO, let us better think about how we could bring the military-political blocs, which still divide Europe, closer together. Let us say, why would one reject from the get-go FRG's membership simultaneously in NATO and in the Warsaw Pact? Such a double membership could become a binding element, some sort of forerunner of the new European structures, and at the same time, it would anchor NATO.

In the practical sense, united Germany could make a statement that it would abide by all the obligations inherited from both the FRG and the GDR. That the Bundeswehr would still be under the orders of NATO, and the troops in the GDR would answer to the government of the new Germany. Simultaneously, the Soviet troops would remain on the territory of the present GDR during the transition period, and all this could be supplemented by some kind of an agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This way we would alleviate the concern of other countries and speed up the construction of the European security system's future structures.

We don't have to accomplish everything at once. A step-by-step approach is possible. For example, we would welcome change in the NATO doctrine already at the next meeting of this bloc.

A natural question arises: if NATO does not plan to fight with us, then with whom? Not with Germany?

Bush. I already said—with instability.

Gorbachev. Do you really think that the more weapons [you have,] the more robust stability would be? It seems to me that the past decades should have convinced you that confrontation and the arms race put a heavy burden on peoples' shoulders.

All right, we tossed this thought around, as they say; now let our ministers search for concrete solutions to external aspects of German unification. Let them search taking into account the progress in the Two Plus Four negotiations, making sure that they preserve our rights as based on the results of World War II. I would not recommend anybody to treat them jokingly—they will end only at the final stage of the overall settlement.

One of the spheres that might be fruitful for such searching [for solutions] could be a discussion of the content of the transition period: what do we fill it with, which structures, how do you change alliances and what kind of common documents do you prepare?

In this connection I am ready to publicly sign the following commitment: if at any time during the transition period the United States has a feeling that the Soviet Union is trying to infringe on their interests, then Washington has an unquestionable right to break out of the agreement and to undertake corresponding unilateral measures.

But we will never allow that to happen. Because that would contradict our own interests.

Bush. This is very good. I will take this statement of yours into consideration. However, I would like to correct one wrong impression. I don't think at all that the more weapons there are the more stability there will be. To the contrary, the United States is striving toward the fastest agreement in Vienna and to an immediate move to even deeper reductions in the framework of Vienna-2. In all this, naturally, we are ready to respect the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union.

Maybe I should not be saying it, but it seems to me that it would be incorrect to draw parallels between the withdrawal of Soviet troops from countries that do not need them any longer and the prospect of reducing the U.S. presence, which is welcomed by practically all Europeans and which represents a stabilizing factor.

Gorbachev. I think we can agree on this. But one has to have a clear understanding that if the Soviet people get an impression that we are disregarded in the German question, then all the positive processes in Europe, including the negotiations in Vienna, would be in serious danger. This is not just bluffing. It is simply that the people will force us to stop and to look around. And I would really prefer not to do it. I would like to move the Soviet-American dialogue ahead, and to strive for a swift achievement of agreements in Vienna and in other forums.

In this connection, it is really important that we achieve a very clear understanding here in Washington. Otherwise, everything will become more complicated, and there are no objective reasons for that.

Moreover, additional flexibility is possible, of course, if it comes from both sides. Let us say, I remember how the Secretary of State hinted to me in Moscow that he was not against going back to our old proposal—to limit the number of Soviet and American troops not by 195 thousand but by 225 thousand. Well, we can think about that.

Baker. I would like to use the opportunity to emphasize the main thought—we are trying to take the interests of the Soviet Union into account to the fullest extent, and the nine points that I presented in Moscow speak to that effect quite clearly. Let me recount them briefly.

- We agreed to support the creation of pan-European structures, which we avoided earlier.
- We announced NATO's adaptation to the new situation by strengthening its political component.
- We are trying to move in the direction of limiting armed forces as quickly as possible, including the Bundeswehr. Obviously, it would require a very close contact and trust on the part of the Germans.
- We assured the Soviet Union that during a defined period there would be no NATO troops in the GDR.
- We are willing to allow the Soviet troops to stay in the GDR for a short period of time. The President intends to discuss this issue with you in more detail later.
- We gave new impetus to the discussion of the problem of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

- Already today we are trying to ensure a solution on the [issue of] borders that would be final and satisfactory for everybody.
- We and the Germans reached an understanding regarding the obligations of future Germany to renounce possession of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons.
- The United States is trying to create favorable political conditions for further development of Soviet-German economic relations.

All this is clearly aimed at ensuring the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union.

Shevardnadze. We are prepared to work on all these issues with the Secretary of State. However, the central issue of the military-political status of future Germany requires a decision at the presidential level.

We also have to determine the content of the transition period, during which united Germany would continue to have obligations both before NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And this is not just a chimera, because parallel to that, the two blocs will be moving closer together, the military confrontation will be taken down and the basis for collective security in Europe will be established.

Bush. NATO is the anchor of stability.

Gorbachev. But two anchors are better. As a seaman, you should be able to understand that.

Bush. And where will we find the second anchor?

Gorbachev. In the East. Let our Ministers think about what it would be concretely.

Bush. Yes, let them think about it. But we have to take into account the exceptional pace of German unification. After the successful conclusion of the consultations in the framework of the Two Plus Four, a new Germany is right around the corner.

And at that moment we could only rely on NATO. Of course we should discuss expanding of the role of the CSCE process, but I will tell you honestly, that it is simply too ponderous to expect any fast and concrete result [from it].

Gorbachev. We do not exclude any options. It is possible that NATO and the Warsaw Pact will continue to exist in some form during a longer period of time than we can imagine right now. As I already said, they could conclude some kind of agreement, accounting for the creation of united Germany and the metamorphoses of their own organizations as well. At the same time, there would be an option of an associated [simultaneous] membership in the WTO and NATO. Because if we want to put an end to the split of the continent once and for all, the military-political structures should be synchronized in accordance with the unifying tendencies of the all-European process.

Today it might sound as a surprise, but we are entering an absolutely new period of European politics. Besides, World War II had already witnessed the birth of a very unusual coalition united by a common noble goal. Is it that we are more stupid than Stalin and Roosevelt?

Bush. We need to learn from their mistakes too.

Gorbachev. So let us create a new free coalition, change doctrines and institutes, establish the primacy of politics over military structures.

Baker. How do you see the coexistence of the new NATO and the new Warsaw Pact in practical terms?

Gorbachev. First of all—a concrete agreement between the blocs, which would give rise to multiple exchanges and the creation of joint organs for strengthening trust and preventing crisis situations.

These processes would provide a good encouragement for the Vienna agreements as well, serve as political insurance for them.

However, if we do it differently, if we include powerful united Germany in one alliance, then it would immediately create an unbalanced situation, and issues would arise to which nobody would be able to find an answer.

Bush. Do you agree with our starting thesis that we should not create a special status for united Germany?

Gorbachev. I would agree [with it] if you accept an associated membership, the principle of blocs moving closer together with united Germany acting as a mediator of the process; i.e., a situation that does not change the present obligations of either the FRG or the GDR. And it would be followed naturally by the reform of the blocs themselves, in an organic linkage with the Vienna and the all-European process.

The terrible losses that we suffered in World War II are also the political reality of today. And no one should be able to forget about it.

Bush. Still, it is hard for me to understand you. Maybe it is because I do not feel threatened by the FRG, I do not see an aggressive power in this democratic state. If you don't break your psychological stereotype, it will be difficult for us to come to an agreement. And an agreement is possible, because both Kohl and we want to cooperate with you in every sphere.

Gorbachev. There should no lack of clarity here. We do not have fear of anybody—not the U.S., not Germany. We just see the necessity of changing [our] relations, the need to break the negative and to create a constructive model. This is our free choice.

I hope nobody here believes in the nonsense that one of the sides won the Cold War. Thoughts like these glide on the surface, grasping only the tip of the iceberg. The conclusion must be completely different: 50 years of confrontation have proven the Cold War's absurdity and that it only leads to self-destruction.

Now about trust. You assert that we do not trust the Germans. But then why would we give the green light to their unification aspirations? We could have given them the red light, we had requisite mechanisms. However, we gave them the opportunity to make their choice by democratic means. You, on the other hand, are saying that you trust the FRG, but you are pulling her into NATO, not allowing her to determine her future on her own after the final settlement. Let her decide on her own what alliance she wants to belong to.

Bush. I fully agree with that. But the Germans have already made their choice quite clear.

Gorbachev. No, you are just trying to put them under your control.

Bush. If Germany does not want to stay in NATO, it has a right to choose a different path. This is what the [Helsinki] Final Act says too.

Gorbachev. Then let us make a public statement on the results of our negotiations, [where we will say that] the U.S. President agreed that sovereign Germany would decide on its own which military-political status it would choose—membership in NATO, neutrality or something else.

Bush. It is the right of any sovereign country to choose alliances. If the government of the FRG—I am talking purely hypothetically—would not want to stay in NATO, or even tell our troops to get out, we would accept that choice.

Gorbachev. That's how we will formulate it then: the United States and the Soviet Union agree that united Germany, upon reaching the final settlement, taking into account the results of World War II, would decide on its own which alliance she would be a member of.

Bush. I would propose a somewhat different formulation: the United States is unequivocally in favor of united Germany's membership in NATO, however, if it makes a different choice, we would not contest it, we will respect it.

Gorbachev. I agree. I accept your formulation.

Bush. Maybe our Ministers should discuss this issue in more detail.

Gorbachev. I am only for it, but let them discuss inclusion of this formulation in some kind of a summary document along with our ideas about the transition period.

Baker. Whatever you say, but the simultaneous obligations of one and the same country toward the WTO and NATO smack of schizophrenia.

Gorbachev. It is only for a financier, who puts cents together into dollars. Politics, however, is sometimes a search for the possible in the sphere of the unfamiliar.

Baker. But obligations to the WTO and NATO are adversarial obligations.

Gorbachev. Here, here, you are closer now. You started to talk about rivalry, and that would lead to confrontation. It means nothing is changing. Therefore, by pulling united Germany into one bloc you would be breaking the balance radically. And then we will have to decide what to do in that new situation—whether to continue to sit in Vienna, and so on.

Let us after all reject the logic of confrontation and search for a constructive outcome.

Falin. I would like to clarify one moment. We are talking about replacing temporary structures, even though they existed for almost 50 years with permanent [structures], in which the Soviet Union and the U.S. could unite for the entire foreseeable future. You said yourself that in the future the FRG could raise the issue of withdrawing from NATO. That is why it would be good for us to think about the future too, to make calculations about the future security structure. Here only a pan-European system, into which united Germany would be integrated on equal conditions with everybody else, can give us guarantees.

If we are united by our understanding of our common ultimate goal, then we can agree on the transition period. The main thing is to reject military

confrontation, to come to an understanding that security in Europe is indivisible. In this sense unification of Germany should become the end of the division of Europe, and not [the event] that solidified [the division of Europe] for the future.

Bush. So what should we do about the public statement?

Shevardnadze. I would not do it in a rush; I would proceed cautiously, taking into account the fragility of the current progress both in the two-plus-four framework, and in terms of preparations for the pan-European summit and the Vienna agreements.

Bush. And still, what are we going to say if we are asked about the results of this discussion?

Gorbachev. We will respond that we devoted this entire plenary session to consideration of the situation in Europe, including the settlement of the external aspects of German unification. On the basis of this exchange of opinions we agreed that the foreign ministers and experts would continue their work on the issues that were raised here.

And if we are asked if our positions moved closer, we could say that we had a serious and useful exchange of opinions, and that now we understand each other's approaches and positions better. Besides that we could add that during the discussion we proposed ideas that require additional consideration. Let them be intrigued by what kind of ideas those were.

Bush. I agree. That's what we will do.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Partially published in Galkia and Chernyaev, Mikhail Gorbachev i germanskii vopros and in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, v. 20, pp. 202–211. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 100: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Second Private Meeting,
Washington, 11:00 a.m. – 11:48 a.m.

June 1, 1990

After showing flexibility on German unification during the previous day's discussions, the Soviet leader now aims to achieve his main political goal—to get Bush to agree to sign a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. Gorbachev explains how important this agreement would be for him and makes a personal plea to the U.S. president in their one-on-one conversation. Bush repeats his earlier contention that Congress will never assent while Gorbachev faces an unresolved situation in Lithuania, implying that he would first have to allow Lithuania to leave the Union. Gorbachev's impression from his meetings with the congressional leaders is very different—that they do not have a “cerebral problem” with the agreement. He is offended by Bush's lack of commitment: “You have chosen the Baltics over me and let's leave it at that.” The Soviet leader is also deeply concerned about the reaction back home: “everyone knows a trade deal was part of our summit. So we have some explaining to do.”

President Gorbachev: This visit is a major event. The atmosphere is important. The meeting with Congressional leaders led me to believe there is now a new atmosphere. My contacts with ordinary people show a real change for the better. Thanks for your cooperation—you can count on mine.

I told Congressional leaders we were worried about the trade agreement. We looked on it as an organic part of the summit—equal with START. These two were the principal pillars of the summit. Business people have been visiting—they now feel they have a chance. In practical terms, an agreement would not cause much of an increase in real trade for years. But an agreement would let a serious business effort begin. The Japanese and Germans, who are everywhere, would not have a monopoly. Of course, we could say that since we are working well with the Europeans, why worry about a trade agreement with the U.S.? I am looking to the long term. Our long-term relations cannot thrive without a trade underpinning.

The President: I agree.

President Gorbachev: Moreover, we are moving to a market economy, closer to the U.S. If this visit included an agreement, this would be an important political signal. I wanted to emphasize these points.

The President: What you said last night made a real impression on me. Here is my letter to you (President read the letter). The letter has never been made public. I wanted to explain to you how our political process works. You think Lithuania is an internal matter, but it has a real impact on my political situation. We want a trade agreement. It is in the U.S., and I hope, in the Soviet, interest. If not for Lithuania

we wouldn't be discussing this issue at all. I was hopeful when you sat down with Mrs. Prunskiene. You heard Mitchell and his linking it with the People's Republic of China. What you saw was political linkage. How do we get out of it?

President Gorbachev: I didn't feel Congress had a real cerebral problem with it. I talked with Bentsen also who was positive.

The President: If a dialogue went on, and the blockade were lifted, the agreement would go through in a minute. The only hangup is Soviet economic might being used against Lithuania and the absence of dialogue. I understand why you can't have us in your internal affairs and I don't want to. But it is a dilemma. I know Congress. I know I can't get it through Congress with the present situation.

President Gorbachev: We have each made our points. I can't force you to agree with my points. You have chosen the Baltics over me and let's leave it at that.

The President: But what are the chances of getting talks going? You have said you would do that.

President Gorbachev: As I told Congress, I favor a dialogue within a constitutional framework, but I won't talk outside of that framework. I want to return to the original situation and proceed toward discussing proceedings. I have some more words. Lithuania is progressing toward some kind of dialogue when I return.

The President: Maybe we can discuss this tomorrow. Because of history, we have a special problem with Lithuania. We want a trade deal. I don't want to publicize any conditions because that makes it look like I am dictating to you. But there is no point in sending up legislation and having the hell kicked out of it.

President Gorbachev: OK. I see you have given thought to this. I see no way to work harder. We are without a trade deal today and have been without a trade deal for many years. This is not a life and death issue. But everyone knows a trade deal was part of our summit. So we have some explaining to do.

The President: I know. They were yelling at me yesterday. It troubles me because I want this summit to be a success. Let's try to work it out.

President Gorbachev: It is more my problem. I have explained it to you and know it is in your hands.

The President: Let me ask about my April 27 letter. I wonder whether you actually saw that letter. Our bureaucracy....

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, I read everything.

The President: OK. Last night, you didn't seem to be familiar with it.

President Gorbachev: It can't happen that a letter from the President of the United States wouldn't be shown to me. They would not last on my staff if that happened. Let us say our concerns about the Baltics are as deep as yours. We want to find a solution because otherwise it would be a blow to Perestroika. But life is not always under our own control.

The President: Let me give it some more thought and we will discuss it again tomorrow.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0841-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 101: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Second Plenary Meeting,
Washington, 11:50 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

June 1, 1990

In the plenary portion of the talks on strategic arms control, Gorbachev states his ultimate goal—“we have a firm intention to sign the treaty this year. That is the most important thing.” Soviet chief negotiator Viktor Karpov offers a detailed report on progress achieved both on strategic nuclear arms reductions and on finalizing the CFE Treaty to be signed in Paris at the CSCE summit in November 1990. Several major differences between the sides remain. The Soviet delegation argues for limitations on, and the eventual cessation of, all nuclear testing, but the United States is not ready for a ban. On the handling of nuclear warheads removed from missiles, the Soviets argue for their physical destruction, “so that they cannot be used in the future.” The Americans prefer putting removed warheads in storage. Both sides agree to leave Soviet heavy ICBMs and MIRVed warheads to later negotiations. The Soviet side accepts the U.S. position on Tu-22 heavy bombers and expresses its willingness to discuss naval aviation when the U.S. is ready. Gorbachev voices concern over U.S. cooperation with Britain on the modernization of British nuclear forces. He reminds Bush that at Reykjavik the Soviets agreed not to count British and French forces but if the U.S. helps them to modernize, it would change the existing balance. One significant achievement that Karpov and his counterpart, Reginald Bartholomew, highlight is the finalization of a bilateral agreement to eliminate chemical weapons, which would stand as one of the most successful pacts ever between the two sides. No breakthroughs are reached until later in the day when negotiators return to the topic of trade relations and Bush decides he can sign an agreement by finessing the emigration law requirement and adding a secret codicil that requires the USSR to suspend its blockade of Lithuania and launch a serious dialogue.

Bush. Let’s begin our discussion with issues of arms control and listen to the experts.

Gorbachev. I give the floor to V.P. Karpov, to summarize the work done during and before the visit, so we can understand where we stand. [...]

Gorbachev. From what you said, I get the impression that there are questions that have to be addressed before we can sign the documents. This could be done in parallel in Geneva, and, it seems, some things can be done here. Otherwise we cannot sign the documents. [...]

Gorbachev. Your experts believe that there are grounds for signing [the treaty] already this year?

Karpov. Yes.

Obukhov. I would like to add that one more document has been agreed upon—a joint declaration on non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as missiles and missile technology.

Bush. I suggest that James Baker also summarize our positions. [...]

Bush. I am very pleased and impressed by what I heard. We are not that far apart. Perhaps only on questions of non-circumvention and some other issues, like heavy ICBMs and “Backfire.” Therefore, I suggest that these issues be re-examined in the afternoon. In the statement about future negotiations we should give them an impetus, indicate their positive momentum. This would not only help to create a positive atmosphere in the relations between our two countries, but would also be well received around the world. [...]

Gorbachev. Mr. President, I agree with what you said, that a great deal of work has been done and we have come a long way. I would like to say here that we have a firm intention to sign the treaty this year. That is the most important thing. In this regard, I would like to suggest the following formula: there are issues that are important to work out the full format of the treaty. We have to have clarity here. It is obvious that there are also issues that should allow us to sign a statement on the basic elements of the future treaty already today. We must do it. I would ask Shevardnadze and Baker to do the necessary work by 17.00.

Here is what troubles me. We had an understanding of what the cooperation between the United States and Great Britain in nuclear matters means. Now it turns out that our partners have a different understanding. We thought that such cooperation is limited to the modernization of submarines and the transition to a system of “Trident-2” and does not encompass other issues. If something arises now like a broad interpretation of the 1972 ABM Treaty, it would be dangerous. It goes against logic, because we have the Reykjavik agreement that up to a certain point we do not include British or French nuclear weapons. That was our concession that opened the way for negotiations. At the same time, we noted the understanding that at some point, when we come to deep cuts in nuclear weapons, these members of the nuclear club would join us. By the way, we can find the corresponding statement by Thatcher, that when the U.S. and USSR sign an agreement on 50 percent reductions, then Great Britain would be ready to join and review nuclear weapons issues. In his usual manner, Mitterrand also expressed this idea, and even China responded. Right now we are approaching 50 percent reductions, and all the other members of the club have to participate. Suddenly, we see that instead of connecting to the nuclear club, an idea is proposed that, if implemented, would allow building nuclear weapons on the side. This is illogical. Therefore, we reiterate our understanding of British modernization. We are only talking about the “Trident-2” system. Everything else is out of the picture. We need arguments, not Bartholomew’s emotions. Right now we are asking ourselves what our negotiating partners want. Suddenly, something akin to a bypass shows up. Though one would think that we should do the opposite and include England and France.

It is also important to stress the idea of the connection of the future agreement with the 1972 ABM Treaty, precisely in the understanding of 1972, which was confirmed in December 1987. This is important, since we are approaching the initialing of the elements of a future agreement.

As for future intentions, I think we could really surprise the people in the U.S. and USSR, as well as around the world, if in our mission statement, today, we suddenly define, clearly and specifically, what we want to do, before we even begin the negotiations. This is not serious. Then why have the negotiations at all? It would be reasonable to raise the question the same way as was done in Reykjavik, when we did something unprecedented and agreed to 50 percent reductions in heavy ICBMs. We then stated that geographic and other factors are different in the U.S. and USSR. We told the U.S. that you are concerned about Soviet heavy ICBMs, and we are concerned about other systems, and we proposed to address all elements of strategic forces. We offered to reduce all elements by 50 percent, so the situation would be the same, but at a different level. So, we reached the current level, and the subject of future negotiations should be all elements, and the fourth element—SLCM. So let's move in that direction. Otherwise, misinterpretations could arise, and the agitated public will throw so many elements at us that everything will get bogged down. Today we already have coordinated elements, and our experts are in talks to tally things up and see what we can do. Let our ministers do some work, and it would be good if some results were reported by 17.00.

Bush. I agree. One more question—open skies. We have differences here. But we are talking about the concept of openness, it should be attractive to the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev. We support this idea in principle, and we supported it immediately. But we need clarifications here: what can be observed from this open sky—the whole Earth or selected areas. I think progress is possible here. [...]

Gorbachev. In other words, we actively support your idea and are ready to work constructively on an agreement. Today we should do this work at the level of experts, and the prospects are encouraging.

Shevardnadze. The main issue is that the side being verified gets to choose the plane. All other issues can be resolved.

Bush. My experts told me that we have big differences here. When we put this idea forward, our own bureaucracy opposed it. Now we have a new era—the era of openness, and we should have a common commitment to the idea of openness.

Bartholomew. I want to clarify that we would like our Soviet colleagues to come to an agreement with us on quotas, planes, and territories, so all of this can be somehow documented in a joint statement. However, this does not seem possible.

Bush. I think that both sides are interested in this question. Our agreement would send a message to the whole world. But if we cannot come up with a joint statement, there is nothing we can do.

Gorbachev. In any case, we can note that we worked constructively and are ready to continue this work.

Regarding Vienna. Lately, there was talk that we are slowing down the work there. We want to reach an agreement as early as this year; an agreement that would make it possible to hold a CSCE Summit. This is the starting point, everything else is details. [...]

Bush. We still have regional issues. Let the ministers work on them, and we will come back to them tomorrow.

Gorbachev. Let them do some more work. In any case, there is great interest in these issues, as can be seen from the press. If Afghanistan comes up, we will not forget to mention Central America. You probably already received a telegram from Mengistu. A single phrase would be enough to get the negotiations going. It is important to show that we are concerned about peace. Let our ministers work and report to us in Camp David.

Bush. I have prepared a list of questions that does not exclude anything, including Afghanistan, Kashmir, etc.

Gorbachev. I received a telegram from Bhutto.

Bush. Bob Gates just returned from there and he is very pessimistic.

Gorbachev. Let him go back and return an optimist.

Bush. I just want to inform you that we intend to touch upon Central America, Cuba, Africa, South Africa, South Korea, the Middle East—these are just some of the questions that we would like to discuss.

Gorbachev. All right. I also have my notes.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Partially published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 20, 2011, pp. 233–238. Translated by Anna Melyakova.]

Document No. 102: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Final Private Meeting,
Camp David, 11:15 a.m. – 12:59 p.m., and 3:00 p.m.

June 2, 1990

This almost day-long conversation takes place at the presidential dacha at Camp David. The atmosphere is relaxed and the interaction very sincere, addressing the most sensitive issues in U.S.-Soviet relations. The conversation features precisely what Reykjavik lacked—"an exceptional level of trust," in the words of Georgy Arbatov. Gorbachev is elated that Bush has finally consented to sign the trade agreement, which gives him a victory to take back to Moscow, a means to allay conservative criticism at home, and at least a symbolic means to address the economic crisis at home.

Bush and Gorbachev discuss several sensitive issues—Israel, India-Pakistan, and Cuba. Bush is extremely sensitive to domestic politics. While he tells Gorbachev that he is "in a big fight with Shamir over settling immigrants in the occupied territories," his administration "is seen as anti-Israel." Agreeing that Israel is a problem for both of them, he is very aware of the Israeli lobby in Congress and reluctant to take any steps to resolve the situation. Gorbachev is concerned because a lot of Soviet Jewish émigrés end up in the new settlements in the occupied territories and that could mean limiting Jewish emigration from the USSR. Bush sees the problem but is not responsive to Gorbachev's suggestions.

On Cuba, the U.S. side demands that the Soviet Union stop its military and economic support of the Castro regime and put pressure on Castro to change the human rights situation. The Soviet leader notes that Castro "is criticizing us more than you," and that "teaching lessons to Castro is useless." Gorbachev is eager to play the role of mediator between the U.S. and Cuba, as he promised the Cuban leader. Gorbachev's secret dream was that his new thinking and personal mediation would result in normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. But here, too, Bush points to the insurmountable domestic political issues. He already has his eye on the 1992 elections.

The conversation moves to Afghanistan, where surprisingly both sides express similar positions. The Soviets are willing to work with Najibullah regarding the transition but in such a way that he would not be "kicked out." The U.S. side agrees that it is hard to quarrel with this position: "We can't argue against Najibullah staying in power, à la Nicaragua, but the problem is how to get the Resistance plugged in." Both sides express concern with radical Islamic elements. In the rest of the conversation, the two leaders discuss the situation in Angola, South Africa, Cambodia, Cyprus, Japan and in both South and North Korea. There is a striking understanding and similarity of positions on virtually every issue.

What this record leaves out is the discussion on biological weapons that took place during Gorbachev and Bush's private walk at Camp David, during which Bush confronted his counterpart with information that the U.S. had received from their British partners after the defection of Soviet biological weapons expert Pasechnik in the fall of 1989. Only two weeks earlier, on May 14, the British and American ambassadors to Moscow, Rodric Braithwaite and Jack Matlock, had presented a démarche on biological weapons to the Soviets.

This memcon is a draft, not a final version. It contains numerous handwritten insertions and strike-throughs by NSC staffer Ed Hewett. Since a number of his edits seem to reflect substantive corrections to the text, they are retained here. (The italicized passages are insertions.)

[DRAFT]

President Gorbachev: In this setting, maybe we can think of some good things to do. But first let me take one step back. Yesterday was an important day. My main thought is that it is good to make good statements and declarations but yesterday, in addition to philosophizing, the right decisions were made. I am pleased with the way we are working on the right actions. Without this, nothing is possible. I promise you my constructive efforts. Naturally, we will not always agree. Optimum solutions are difficult.

I would like Camp David to be a place where we repeat what we said yesterday and reaffirm the kind of relationship we want. We should reaffirm that relationship from Camp David, including regular meetings, and a regular secure phone link so that we can exchange views frequently.

The President: Do you want to say all this at our press conference?

President Gorbachev: Yes.

The President: I agree. So far, I think our meeting is being portrayed this way.

President Gorbachev: Yes, even the pictures now are showing the closeness—ourselves, the Ministers, the two ladies, all showing closeness.

The President: We will keep it going. We will take some hits on trade and arms control from the Right, but I think we can manage it. We talked last night about trying for meetings without all the trappings.

President Gorbachev: I have been told the Supreme Soviet has three pages of questions for me. I said I will answer more than that when I get back. I included two Committee Chairmen in my delegation for this reason. One represents our military-industrial complex, and I also brought the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Now they are not on the sidelines and it is important that they see how these things work. Soon I will have a Warsaw Pact meeting, and it will be a new Warsaw Pact. Only Shevardnadze and myself and Jaruzelski are old members—all the others are new. I will report the results to you.

The President: Just a technical point. We will have a secure line in a year ~~operation~~ and a direct line this fall. (Description of secure line.)

President Gorbachev: Shall we go through our points?

The President: Fine. There are points I must raise: human rights, *refuseniks*, immigration, and human rights in general. You want us to take more Jews. We are taking more—about all we can.

There are many vestiges of anti-Semitism. We have skinheads and you have a problem too, and to the degree you could speak out publicly: that would help. It helps me. We would encourage direct flights to Israel. You should know that I am

in a big fight with Shamir over settling immigrants in the occupied territories. My administration is seen as anti-Israel. *It stems from my saying no settlements in the occupied territories and East Jerusalem.* This caused a firestorm here and on the Right in Israel. (*Described what Netanyahu had said.*) We are a true friend of Israel. In our new relationship I hope that you can take account of anti-Semitism, direct flights to Israel, *refuseniks*, and keep up human rights progress. It would help me a lot. If we can separate anti-Semitism from policy it would help.

President Gorbachev: Let me respond. We *will* seek to cooperate on the full spectrum of human rights. On immigration, here is *information* ~~the readout~~ on *refuseniks*. There are twenty on the list. We have given exit visas for five, a temporary departure for one, a temporary visit for one to Great Britain (probably with relatives), one is dead, and there is nothing on the other eleven. We will have *more involvement* ~~an announcement~~ but that is my report for now. I agree that we do have to take a stand against anti-Semitism. I have spoken out in general and I will find a way to speak out specifically.

The President: That would help. It is a world-wide problem and if we are seen cooperating on it that would help.

President Gorbachev: We do have a problem between the Russian and Jewish intelligentsia. We will speak out but I don't want to take sides; here we have to find a way. There are many organizations, some even Fascist which say ugly things. Israel, in letting that settlement go on in Jerusalem has caused an outcry in the Arab press. Even Mubarak said he would have to protest in our press that we are settling the West Bank and replenishing the Israeli army. They are trying to put us against each other. Maybe Israel should be told that if they settle in the occupied territories I will have to stop immigration.

The President: It sounds easy, but it is complicated. *Individual settlers settle-*
ments make it hard to be clear on it.

President Gorbachev: Our Ministers could consult on the language. We must try to figure out a solution.

The President: Saying no more than this to Israel would get world Jewry up in arms. We could not sign up to that.

President Gorbachev: Maybe Baker and Shevardnadze can work something out.

The President: It is a risky issue for a joint statement.

President Gorbachev: I am not thinking of a joint statement but just getting our policies coordinated.

Secretary Baker: I just wanted to say that in 1988 we started a dialogue that let us talk to both parties and move forward on a peace process. It would be helpful if you could let Arafat know that our dialogue can continue only if he speaks out on Abu Abbas. Otherwise, we cannot continue the dialogue.

President Gorbachev: He has disassociated himself, but not condemned the attack.

Secretary Baker: That is right, but the basis for our dialogue is that there must be no terrorism.

Minister Shevardnadze: We got a telegram from Arafat which says: "Violence is getting out of control. Close to explosion. Exacerbated by US veto." I don't know why you had to do that—it (the UN resolution) would have pacified the situation.

Secretary Baker: (Describes U.S. actions.)

President Gorbachev: Let's think about this. There is a lot of truth to what Arafat says. If there is an explosion, he will be totally isolated. We have worked hard to get Assad and Arafat to work together, ~~as well as Benjedid, and especially Mubarak..~~ Mubarak is easier, and so is Benjedid. Qadhafi is a problem. But maybe we can work on sending Goulding. We will work on Arafat to clam [sic] things down. ~~I am having lunch with Perez de Cuellar on Monday. I will tell him this. We will do it even against Israel if necessary.~~

The Pres: I am having lunch with Perez de Cuellar on Monday. I will tell him this. We will do it even against Israel if necessary.

Secretary Baker: And remember, we cannot continue the dialogue if he is tied to terrorism.

President Gorbachev: But Arafat thinks this is patriotic resistance. It is tough for him to speak out.

Secretary Baker: But he disassociated himself from it.

Minister Shevardnadze: Shamir is more difficult.

The President: (Describes U.S. problems with Shamir over settlements.)

Minister Shevardnadze: Maybe this is a time to mention the idea of an international conference. We support your idea of a dialogue but we should think of a conference also.

President Gorbachev: Everyone but Shamir supports a conference. If we started preparations for a conference we could *recognize Israel immediately*.

Secretary Baker: As Eduard knows, we don't reject a conference but for now I would not appear at a conference. Under the right circumstances we could go along with one, however. Right now the circumstances are not right. Back to Arafat. The timing of that attack was terrible. We want to keep the pressure on for the dialogue, and this gives Israel a way out.

Minister Shevardnadze: Israel would go along with a conference?

Secretary Baker: No. (Describes situation.)

President Gorbachev: Let's have Eduard and Jim talk about it. Maybe we can get Israel to take the first step towards a conference. We could jointly guarantee Israel's existence as a state. We could establish immediate diplomatic relations; then we could be helpful. The bigger Arab nations could make statements recognizing the realities and the Israeli situation. We have contact with Jewish organizations. Eduard has met Peres and Shamir. We could establish consulates.

The President: You have gained much by your immigration policy. (Talks about Max Fisher comment.)

Secretary Baker: One thing you said is interesting. Israel complains that among the Arabs no one but Egypt recognizes Israeli's right to exist. That could help.

President Gorbachev: We have worked with Arafat to bring him around.

Secretary Baker: We will talk.

President Gorbachev: When Mubarak came to Moscow he spoke of a freeze, ~~one~~ *free zone* without nuclear or chemical weapons (jokes, toes curling up). Maybe we could look at it and support Mubarak. There are too many *capabilities weapons* there. They are different from the Europeans; they get all fired up. We really should think about it, because the region is so heavily armed.

The President: ~~I~~ *Israel* would resist that.

President Gorbachev: Let Eduard and Jim think about it.

The President: Let's move to other regional issues, starting with India and Pakistan. We are concerned about a war. Bob Gates came back with negative assessment. We should stay in touch. Everyone would be a loser in such a war. In the 1970's we tilted toward Pakistan and you tilted toward India. The situation is different now. We won't try to take advantage of you. We don't have a dog in that fight, even though we like Bhutto. We would encourage an immediate cease fire. We are open to suggestions. If the situation heats up I hope we can work together. Maybe not, but I don't want it to disrupt us.

President Gorbachev: I had a call from Singh—the morning I was coming here. He wanted me to know that he would do his best to calm things down. I responded that I would welcome a solution to this old problem. I want good relations with both India and Pakistan. We never broke with Pakistan, even in the worst days of Afghanistan. It is therefore in our interest that the situation not become more acute. Let's keep in touch.

The President: I understand that you have a problem with making a joint statement, but maybe we could deal with this at the press conference.

President Gorbachev: It might be sensitive for India and Pakistan if we were concerting on them, but at the press conference would be a good way to do it. (Discussion on what is going on.) Let's stay in *close touch*, and let's do the press conference thing (*i.e. deal with the issue by responding to press questions*).

The President: My other regional items include Africa, Ethiopia, etc., but I need to register a point on Cuba. Jim and Eduard have talked about Afghanistan. On Cuba, we think Castro is swimming against the tide; he is unreconstructed. Many think we are picking on him, but he is an outcast. If you changed your economic relationship with Cuba, that would push him. He won't take the Ortega route.

President Gorbachev: Castro supported the Nicaragua solution.

The President: That was because he thought that Ortega would win the election. But maybe we could use that as a model.

Secretary Baker: As in the case of Nicaragua, if Castro were to change we would change our policy.

President Gorbachev: Let me say a few words on this. I agree that there can be no peace in Central America if Cuba is isolated. We are not doing that, but we see that you have that syndrome. I spoke about it to the Vice President. He said he had gone to the Caribbean six times, and I said "you did not stop in Cuba."

We should analyze Castro. He is criticizing us more than you. In the Cuban missile crisis, he kept Mikoyan running around the island for a week. Teaching

lessons to Castro is useless. When I was there, I could see they were tense. I told him I was not trying to change the way he does things, but let me do things my way as well. Then they relaxed and it went alright. If you got in touch with him I think he would respond, but trying to force him to change would be useless. He has told me, "I will not take U.S. dictation, but if they will sit and talk" Maybe we could set something up that is not bilateral. He is ready to hear you out—to talk at any level. It is better if he hears from you rather than from us. A change in our economic relations is coming. It will be based on buying the things we need, although I realize it will not be at market prices. It can be sold for dollars on the world market. Also, we buy citrus and nonferrous metals. We are beginning to put our economic relations on a realistic relations [sic]. Before, no one even thought about the economic aspects of our relations. The Latin Americans show more understanding of the role of Cuba, so it is not that simple.

There is a remaining problem to discuss: the Contras.

The President: I think that is back on track.

General Akhromeyev: I have a personal relationship with Castro, and he says he is prepared to go very far. He understands the problem.

The President: Let me tell you about the U.S.-Cuban problem. (He describes the Cuban-American patriotic community.) Therefore there is a lot of emotion in this issue for *Americans* ~~the Cubans~~. (Hands him a Congressional letter on Cuba). I hear what you have said on Castro and I hope you understand our feelings on the issue. Let's keep it on the table.

Secretary Baker: We haven't asked Castro to give us something before we sit down to talk, only that he cease subversion in El Salvador and Latin America—that is all.

President Gorbachev: Do you want us to convey this to him?

The President: It would be helpful.

President Gorbachev: If El Salvador improved visibly there would be a change by you?

The President: Yes, but I won't give him a State Dinner!

Secretary Baker: El Salvador has a freely elected government, and he is subverting it.

The President: I don't like seeing Umberto Ortega as head of the army in Nicaragua because the armed forces were a Party.

Minister Shevardnadze: Just a word on Cuba. We are having some discussions with the US on Cuba in quest of some imaginative solutions. If the U.S. treats Cuba as an equal, things might work—as in the case of Angola, where we made it work after they got treated like equal partners. On El Salvador, I think that Castro may undertake a serious discussion.

President Gorbachev: What do you want us to do?

Secretary Baker: Here is a wild suggestion: that you tell him the President said that there will be an improvement in relations and a dialogue, if he will firmly sign on to and support Esquipulas, which bans the export of insurgency to Central America.

The President: That only deals with a small part of the problem. For the establishment of full relations with Cuba the people must be able to have free elections, and must enjoy human rights, like letting people out of jail, etc. For *normal* relations, Castro cannot be the only one out of step in the hemisphere.

President Gorbachev: For now we will convey to him suggestions that will permit the dialogue to begin. Then it can progress.

The President: I must tell you that the Soviet relationship to Cuba sours the US view of you.

Secretary Baker: The MIG-29 is a big issue for us psychologically.

The President: Why don't we break for lunch then we can rest and get back together at 3 p.m.

(Lunch break)

President Gorbachev: (Begins with a discussion of the differences between the Soviet and US federations, emphasizing the nationalities aspect of the Soviet federation. Describes the fight between Stalin and Lenin on the nature of the federation, saying that after Lenin died Stalin left the law the same but ruthlessly created a military state. Then Stalin said that the nationalities problem no longer existed; there was a "Soviet" nationality. So once the dam burst, the nationalities issues burst out into the open. The Byelorussian language had almost died out.)

The President: Shall we return to our agenda? I dominated the discussion with my subjects this morning, although we didn't raise Afghanistan.

President Gorbachev: I would be happy to discuss Afghanistan.

The President: On Afghanistan, we would really like to be disengaged. We would like to cut loose, and we have no interest in a radical, and Muslim administration. We are also worried about the radicals, and we are not trying to install and anti-Soviet fundamentalist regime. (Described the political arrangements that the U.S. seeks.) If they got underway, we would stop our aid to the Mujahedin. If we could both state that no party would be able to subvert the process and state that a neutral body would arrange the elections, we would have a good outcome. Najibullah could participate but not as head of government. Hebmaytyar [sic] is an undesirable conservative. I asked whether you can live with a short supervised period where Najibullah could participate but step aside from government.

President Gorbachev: There is mutual understanding for a neutral period plus a mechanism for conducting an election leading to a broad-based government; also, for a UN role for a transition period and in the conduct of elections. Do we understand that neither the government nor the opposition would transfer the government to a neutral authority. So the only hope is elections on the basis of the status quo. Let them conduct their elections in their own way. We can't remove Najibullah or Hekmaytyar [sic] from the scene. Najibullah is beginning to put more strings on us.

The President: He thinks he is getting stronger.

President Gorbachev: He thinks he is getting more support. Some former opposition members are managing local government under the general supervision of government forces.

Minister Shevardnadze: We need a new approach, because neither side has the leverage to achieve a solution.

The President: How does Najilbah [sic] feel about elections?

Minister Shevardnadze: I have talked to him. He favors a Nicaragua-type solution, with a group charged with developing elections.

President Gorbachev: Would Najilbah [sic] be willing to step aside as part of a normal process, but not be kicked out?

Minister Shevardnadze: Yes, but not as a withdrawal. Then a conference could set up an election process. Our differences are not great. We can't get Najibullah out. Actually, this process is getting under way. He is inviting Zahir Shah to take the highest position.

President Gorbachev: We would like a neutral regime, not one hostile to the U.S.

The President: We can't argue against Najibullah staying in power, a la Nicaragua, but the problem is how to get the Resistance plugged in.

President Gorbachev: Neither the Mujahedin nor Najibullah will conduct the elections. The UN or the OIC will do it. Najibullah does not want to be kicked out. That is his minimum condition.

Secretary Baker: It is difficult for us to argue against the Nicaraguan model. Our problem is with the Resistance. We need something for them to show that elections would be fair, that supervision would be neutral, and that the outcome would be observed. What about Najibullah taking a head of state role during this period to demonstrate that a transition authority would conduct the election and provide security.

President Gorbachev: Najibullah would be a kind of interim acting president during the election?

Secretary Baker: Yes, but with something less than full authority.

President Gorbachev: We must think about it.

The President: Let's have Jim and Eduard talk some more about this.

President Gorbachev: Yes, let's, because there are lots of areas of agreement.

Minister Shevardnadze: We could try to formulate three or four points on which the Afghans could agree: on the transition period for elections and the conduct thereof, on the role of the UN, etc. We would agree that Afghanistan would be unified, neutral, and demilitarized.

President Gorbachev: And the only solution to Afghanistan is a political solution. The two sides should recognize each other. There would be four or five principles on which we could agree.

Minister Shevardnadze: This would be similar to Nicaragua and to what we are trying to do in Angola, etc. It is a tested process.

The President: How about Ethiopia?

President Gorbachev: We have an appeal from Mengistu.

Minister Shevardnadze: The essence of his letter is that he would agree to the UN as observers in his talks with Eritrea. They were opposed to any outside body until now. One other element: they agree to *Massawa* for humanitarian relief,

subject to the sovereignty of Ethiopia. The Eritreans must agree. The US and the Soviet Union should suggest an international conference for an overall settlement in the horn of Africa. That should come from us, not them. Our two groups have been working on language. Another issue was our cargo planes for relief—we agree, on condition that the Eritreans don't shoot them down.

Secretary Baker: How about a joint appeal that the Eritreans should not shoot, on the basis that people will starve if they do.

The President: This is about all we can do today.

President Gorbachev: If we can issue a joint appeal, let's conclude and let our experts work on it. (Dennis brings a paper that is given to Obukov and it is read to Gorbachev.)

Secretary Baker: I think that a joint statement on aid involving Soviet planes and US food would look good.

President Gorbachev: On Southern Africa, we don't have a big disagreement on what is happening in South Africa. In Southern Africa we are already working together. We will be flexible toward changes in South Africa, supporting those people who are working peacefully to abolish apartheid. We would encourage a joint statement here.

The President: Mandela is a hopeful person to conduct a dialogue with de Klerk. Both of them are coming here. The Europeans may ease sanctions, but we will not do that.

Minister Shevardnadze: A unique situation may be emerging with both sides urging a peaceful solution. We should stimulate this process.

Secretary Baker: On Angola, we would like to pursue the election route. You say that Dos Santos is not quite ready. But we should push in that direction. The two sides are talking and we have offered talks under our joint sponsorship.

Minister Shevardnadze: One new element: Savimbi offered to meet with us. Dos Santos does not object and we will do it privately.

The President: What shall we discuss next?

President Gorbachev: Korea—a lot of things worry us on the peninsula. I think we agree the two sides should engage in dialogue. A small step was taken in the release of U.S. troops. Politically, that is an important gesture. We are worried there is no agreement between North Korea and the IAEA, and they are very touchy about any contacts we have with South Korea. Those contacts are economic, and they are good. South Korea would like Siberian resources, and we are willing. Roh asked for a contract and we agreed, thinking it would be kept quiet. I am worried about the reaction of the North. We have told Kim there is no change in our policy, no recognition. We have said were [sic] just meeting with the South Koreans to make their acquaintance and to promote Korean dialogue. We don't know what will come of it. Once again, we may be accused of betrayal.

The President: We think it is a good thing you are seeing Roh. Our concern is Kim and his blocking of the IAEA agreement and the lack of moderating behavior. South Korea's reaching out is good. If Kim could accept safeguards, it would

help. We are worried about instability on the peninsula. Earlier, we would have been upset about your talking to the South Koreans. This is no longer the case.

President Gorbachev: We will try to explain ourselves.

The President: North Korea made one positive move: their return of the remains of five US soldiers.

President Gorbachev: We did our bit on that.

Minister Shevardnadze: The Koreans asked if the US would provide them with non-nuclear ~~generators~~ *guarantees*. Then maybe they will sign on with the IAEA.

The President: Will there be a more moderate government in Korea? We don't know much about it.

President Gorbachev: These Eastern systems are hard to figure out. The way is being paved to transfer power to the son. They have swallowed Hungary's establishment of relations with South Korea, but it will be different when we make contact. ~~We should~~ Think about ~~more~~ *nuclear* guarantees.

General Scowcroft: If they would guarantee not to attack South Korea.

President Gorbachev: Why not?

General Scowcroft: We have tried formulations before but we can look at it again.

The President: Let's talk about Japan. It can be helpful; they can help with economic assistance, as they have in Eastern Europe. Kaifu is stronger now, and we are working pragmatically on trade. Many feel Japan is buying up the U.S., but I don't worry about that. Japan might be helpful if you could deal with the Territories. It is your business, but I think you would find it beneficial. I commend Kaifu to you—and hope he is still in power when you go there.

President Gorbachev: We decided it was worthwhile for me to visit next year. Meanwhile, Shevardnadze, Yakovlev and Yeltsin will visit this fall. The Japanese know in principle that the Territories issue is clear, but their involvement in our Eastern Territories has been unsatisfactory thus far. For a long time they resisted any economic discussions, and they still think the economic relationship benefits us more than them. Their Foreign Ministry is conservative through and through. There is people contact, but no real business being conducted. When we move to a market system and open up to foreign firms, I think they will change. But 97% of the Soviet people oppose any movement on the Islands.

The President: Let's move on to Cambodia.

President Gorbachev: I think there is some hope there. I am slightly optimistic. Our common task is to solidify the agreements that the four sides made, and to help set up the supervisory organization. I have statements from Sihanouk and from Hun Sen which are very similar. There is some convergence emerging.

The President: We have little influence, but we will urge cooperation. We will talk to the PRC even though we are without much influence with them. We hope that you will also do so.

President Gorbachev: My impression is that the Chinese are acting more positively. Shevardnadze discussed the issue with Li Peng and they are now

normalizing relations with Vietnam. The fact that China and Vietnam are talking is sending a signal to Phnom Penh. (There was a humorous discussion of Cuba, sugar and moonshine. The President described the US sugar problem and Central American sales of coffee and sugar to the US.)

Secretary Baker: (Renews our proposal for the Soviet Union to join the G-24 in helping Central America.)

President Gorbachev: Our cooperation with Nicaragua in the past will continue. We are considering it (the proposal regarding the G-24).

The President: What is next?

President Gorbachev: Cyprus. Vassiliou has written to both of us. He wants us to support a UN mission to Cyprus to break the deadlock.

Minister Shevardnadze: In order not to antagonize Greece or Turkey, the best way is for each side to support UN efforts.

The President: What is left?

General Scowcroft: We need to discuss coordination for the press conference on Germany and Lithuanian [sic].

President Gorbachev: We could say we had a good exchange, that both sides presented their arguments and made their case, and that it is not just a question between the two of us. As a result we decided that these consultations should continue. That is the shortest formula.

The President: They will press me on trade, that I said Lithuania *complicated the situation*. I will say that the trade agreement is in the best interest of both sides. The next step is *early, emigration* legislation (~~on immigration~~) and that is where it stands. They will ask how about Lithuania. I will say I expressed myself fully on Lithuania but the next step is *early emigration* legislation.

Secretary Baker: They will ask whether there is a side deal. When I was asked, I said I could not talk about private conversations. The President said it will be difficult to get trade legislation through Congress and that *is true*, but that issue does not arise now because the next step is Soviet emigration legislation.

President Gorbachev: The rest of it I will say. We have to bear in mind that rigid linkage should be avoided. We had a direct discussion of Lithuania. I discussed the situation and the prospects. We are looking for, and I expect I will find a solution within the framework of our Federation. Each Republic can withdraw or change the form of its relationship, but this must be in the established framework.

The President: The more you can explain that to the US, the better. I will just stay away from linkage.

President Gorbachev: And we will point out that it is not just one agreement, we have agreements on grain, aviation, etc. I will say that we cannot take away the right of self-determination, but since it is a constitutional right it must be done constitutionally.

The President: The press is now more positive. *Time* and *Newsweek* said you were in trouble. That created a tough environment, but you have shown yourself completely in charge.

President Gorbachev: It is a complex period, but we have to accept a pluralism of views. Not everyone will agree with us, or we wouldn't have pluralism.

Secretary Baker: (AFL and *Donets Conference*)

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA request 2009-0275-S and Mandatory Review request 2011-0842-MR by the *National Security Archive*. (Original in *Brent Scowcroft Collection*, *Special Separate USSR Notes File*, *Gorbachev Files*, Folder: *Gorbachev (Dobrynin) Sensitive July-December 1990* [2].)]

Document No. 103: "Briefing Allies on Washington Summit,"
U.S. Department of State Cable

June 15, 1990

This five-page cable, prepared two weeks after the Washington summit, provides the Bush administration's fullest version of the meeting's results in the form of briefing points for U.S. diplomats to deliver to the allies. Classified SECRET, this briefer includes several additional paragraphs of description just for the allies, as well as quotes from the "candid" exchanges with Gorbachev. For example, the cable quotes Gorbachev as saying, were it not for the development of close working relations with Washington, the "rapid pace of change in Europe could have provoked a real clash of interests between the two countries, like 'putting a match to a bonfire.' " Probably the most awaited news from this summit was on Germany in Europe, but this cable states that "no breakthroughs were made," only that "some new ideas emerged," to be discussed by the ministers. While Gorbachev agreed that "freedom of choice" under the Helsinki Final Act could apply to Germany's decision on alliance membership, the cable stresses that Soviet decision making is "in flux and characterized by many internal contradictions." This portrayal of the outcome contradicts the subsequent triumphalist description of the Washington summit as the moment when Gorbachev finally conceded Germany's unification in NATO. In fact, Gorbachev and Kohl did not make their decisions until their meeting in Arkhyz in mid-July.

Overview

- When Presidents Bush and Gorbachev met last December in Malta, they laid out a broad agenda to guide the further development of U.S.-Soviet relations.
- Much of that agenda has now been completed; the Washington Summit produced significant and concrete agreements spanning the range of U.S.-Soviet issues.
- In total, the sides concluded 14 agreements and released 11 joint statements. These reflect a maturing of U.S.-Soviet relations, as we press forward with President Bush's goal of challenging our past history of confrontation and building a relationship of enduring cooperation.
- But significant differences remain between us on important issues. First of all was the question of the Baltics.
 - Gorbachev explained his position and the conditions under which Moscow would be prepared to begin a dialogue with Vilnius. He said the Soviets did not insist that the Lithuanians annul their declaration of independence, only that they suspend it and pursue negotiations within the framework of Soviet Law.
 - The President reaffirmed our non-recognition policy and support for the Baltic peoples' strivings for self-determination.

- We left the Soviets with no doubts as to our concern over the lack of dialogue and Moscow’s economic sanctions, and of their effect on U.S.-Soviet relations.
- The atmospherics of the summit were good. The presidents approached problems in a cordial and constructive way, even on issues where they disagreed.
 - As the President noted, it was a mark of how far the U.S.-Soviet relationship has come that his discussions with Gorbachev on difficult issues could be characterized by a spirit of candor and openness, with the sides seeking not only to understand the other’s position, but to build cooperation.
 - Indeed, Gorbachev at one point observed that, had U.S.-Soviet working relations not been so well developed last year, the rapid pace of change in Europe could have provoked a real clash of interests between the two countries, like “putting a match to a bonfire.”
- So we believe we have a good basis for tackling those unresolved issues that remain on our agenda.
- The leaders agreed to meet on a regular basis with a focus on working encounters. Gorbachev invited the President to make a state visit to the Soviet Union.

Germany and Europe

- Presidents Bush and Gorbachev had an in-depth exchange of views on the changes underway in Europe, with particular focus on the process of German unification.
- While no breakthroughs were made, some new ideas emerged that will be explored in upcoming discussions between foreign ministers and in the Two-Plus-Four.
- The President said in his press conference that the alliance membership was a matter for the Germans to decide, consistent with the Helsinki Final Act. Gorbachev did not object.
- But Soviet thinking seems still to be in flux and characterized by many internal contradictions.
- Gorbachev repeatedly emphasized the importance of a transition period.
- It is not clear what Gorbachev’s acceptance of the principle of freedom of choice means in practice.
- President Bush reiterated our approach to German unification, stressing that there should be no discriminatory constraints on German sovereignty and no singularization of a united, democratic Germany.
- He assured Gorbachev that no one wanted to isolate the Soviets.
- He reviewed the Nine Points we have developed to address the Soviets’ legitimate security concerns, and stressed that Germany’s membership in NATO was a factor for stability and security in Europe.
- He also noted the benefits to the USSR of economic relations with the new Germany.

Regional Problems

- The two presidents discussed regional issues during the third day of the summit at Camp David.
- The discussions were held in an atmosphere that was very relaxed, free-wheeling and marked by extraordinary candor and openness.
- Many ideas were exchanged and a broader basis for cooperation was established on some issues. Although no breakthroughs occurred.
- The two presidents discussed Afghanistan and agreed that there was a measure of common ground in the approaches of the two sides.
 - In particular, we agree on using the electoral process as a mechanism for establishing a permanent government. We also agree that a transitional authority should prepare for and conduct elections.
- The critical area of difference remains the role of Najibullah in a transition period.
 - President Bush expressed our concern about Soviet insistence that Najibullah retain the advantages of incumbency during a transition process—a position that makes it very difficult to get such a process started. Particularly, given the strength of resistance views about Najibullah.
- On the Middle East, President Bush raised U.S. concerns about the recent attempted Palestinian terrorist raid against Israel, expressing the view that Yassir Arafat had to condemn that act, and disassociate himself from its sponsors.
- The Soviets agreed Arafat should condemn that incident.
- The two presidents had a candid exchange on the emigration issue and the question of Soviet Jewish emigrants settling in the occupied territories.
 - President Bush pushed for implementation of the Aeroflot-El Al Direct Flights Agreement to assist the process of emigration and to alleviate hardships posed by the lack of direct air links between Moscow and Tel Aviv.
- President Gorbachev complained about the attitude of Israel on settlements in the occupied territories and urged the U.S. to do more in that regard.
 - Gorbachev noted that the USSR had been bombarded with criticism from Arab countries on the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration and implied during his joint press conference with President Bush that, if Soviet concerns are not heeded by Israel, he may have to give further thought to issuing exit permits.
 - He stated his hope that Israel would provide assurances after further discussions with the U.S. on the issue of new settlements in the occupied territories.
- The Soviets said nothing during the private summit discussions, however, to indicate any backsliding from their commitment to permit open Soviet Jewish emigration. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze has subsequently confirmed to Secretary Baker that Soviet emigration policy would not change.
- The two sides also discussed the volatile situation in Kashmir agreeing to watch the situation carefully and to urge restraint in continuing parallel approaches to India and Pakistan.

- The two leaders reviewed the situation in Central America and Cuba. Secretary Baker and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze also discussed this subject.
- Both sides agreed on the need to support the Esquipulas peace process.
- The President and the Secretary urged the Soviets to use their influence with Castro to get Cuba to end arms shipments to the FMLN in El Salvador and support a negotiated solution to the Salvadoran conflict.
 - While suggesting that the U.S. make direct approaches to Cuba in an effort to improve bilateral relations, the Soviets said they would probe the Cubans on the issue of arms to the FMLN, and would also continue economic aid to Nicaragua.
- On Asia, President Bush raised the issue of the Northern Territories, pointing out that the U.S. fully supports the Japanese claim to those islands.
 - He urged President Gorbachev to resolve this issue with Japan, since this would contribute greatly to a reduction of East-West tensions.
 - The Soviet side offered its standard reply on the issue, that it is a bilateral problem to be settled between the USSR and Japan. Gorbachev also referred to his planned trip to Japan in 1991.
- The two sides also discussed Cambodia. The President felt it was important to support the efforts of Japan, Thailand and other states to resolve the differences among the Cambodian parties.
 - They also took note of the progress made so far in the Perm Five meetings on the external aspects of a comprehensive settlement.
- The two presidents also discussed the Korean Peninsula.
 - In the context of his upcoming meeting with ROK President Roh Tae Woo in San Francisco on June 4, Gorbachev explained that the USSR intended to improve its relations with the Republic of Korea and underscored the economic potential to be gained for Moscow from better ties with Seoul.
 - He admitted that it would complicate Soviet relations with North Korea, but said that Moscow would go ahead with its plans nevertheless.
- President Bush raised the North Korean nuclear problem, expressing U.S. concerns about the failure of the DPRK to sign and implement an IAEA Nuclear Safeguards Agreement.
 - The U.S. noted that on several occasions the North had been given standard negative security assurances from the U.S.
- Gorbachev replied that the USSR was concerned as well about North Korean failure to act on its obligations. He said the Soviets had approached the North on this issue and suggested the U.S. consider a direct approach to Pyongyang.
- Asian regional security issues were not brought up by either side.
- The presidents discussed the situation in Africa, focusing on Southern Africa and the problems in Angola and South Africa.
 - The two leaders offered their strong support for an intra-Angolan dialogue and the current process underway between the two parties to the conflict.

- On South Africa, both expressed optimism about the possibilities for a settlement, since President de Klerk and Nelson Mandela were engaged in talks.
- As a symbol of our growing ability to cooperate in the resolution of regional conflicts, the two presidents also issued a joint statement on Ethiopia.
 - The statement calls for a UN-led relief effort that would use Soviet transport to carry American food to those in need in Northern Ethiopia. The statement also expresses the hope that the peace efforts would succeed.

[Source: U.S. State Department, State 193849, obtained through FOIA in 1997 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 104: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 9:26 a.m. – 10:06 a.m.

July 17, 1990

President Bush calls his Soviet counterpart after several crucial events have taken place in rapid sequence during the first two weeks of July. Immediately after Gorbachev's return from Washington, he met with the new leadership of the transformed Warsaw Pact in Moscow and announced that the division of Europe had ended and the socialist alliance now would cooperate with NATO. This notion was echoed by the London Declaration through which the Western allies reached out to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe with "a hand of friendship." The 28th Congress of the CPSU, the last in the history of the Soviet Party, was also held during the first half of the month—described by Gorbachev here as "perhaps the most difficult and important period in my political life." The Congress subjected the party leader to scathing criticism from both conservative Communists and the democratic opposition. He managed to defend his program and win reelection as general secretary, but he had very little to show from his engagement with the West, especially after ceding so much ground on German unification and ultimately agreeing to allow a unified Germany to join NATO.

While Gorbachev fought for his political life as Soviet leader, the Houston summit of the Big Seven debated ways to help perestroika, but because of U.S. opposition to credits or direct economic aid prior to the enactment of serious free-market reforms, no concrete assistance package was approved; the group went no further than to authorize "studies" by the IMF and World Bank. Gorbachev counters that given enough resources the USSR "could move to a market economy," otherwise, the country "will have to rely more on state-regulated measures." Finally, Gorbachev mentions the crucial agreements he has just reached with Kohl in Moscow and the Caucasus resort of Arkhyz, although he declines to discuss them on an open phone line. In Arkhyz, he at last accepted German unification in NATO and received Kohl's pledge of a substantial economic package and help with Soviet troop relocation from East German territory.

The President: Hello.

President Gorbachev: Hello. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President: Good afternoon, or good morning from here. Congratulations on the success of the Kohl visit.

President Gorbachev: Thank you.

The President: As a matter of fact, I just talked to Chancellor Kohl and he is pleased. He thinks the agreements you reached are good not just for Soviet-German relations, but for U.S.-Soviet relations too. Needless to say, we are pleased with your comments that a unified Germany has the right to choose its alliance membership. This showed great statesmanship on your part, and we feel good

about it. I hope we can make similar progress on CFE and on START in the months ahead.

But the main purpose of my call, as Chair of the Houston G-7 Summit, is to give you a brief report on that meeting. I will follow-up in writing. I also know that Kohl discussed this issue with you, too.

President Gorbachev: Thank you.

The President: I hope you noticed from our communique that we all stressed our willingness to help the Soviet Union, but that perestroika will depend on the success of your reforms. So, we tried to include positive language on that and hope you noted it. We made the point that western technical assistance should be provided now, which is something you mentioned in your letter to me. I think the U.S. can play an important role here. I hope we can get our people together so that we can intensify this technical cooperation.

We have in mind focussing [sic] on one particular area where we could work together—on transportation and food distribution. We could perhaps work together in that area. As you know, we have legal obstacles in providing credits, but we did agree that some of the western countries could provide credits now to the Soviet Union.

The communique called for asking the IMF to convene a study with the World Bank, the OECD and the EBRD on the Soviet economy, if that would be welcomed by you, and to make recommendations on how our assistance could be most helpful to your reforms. All the Houston participants agreed we wanted the Summit to give momentum to assistance to the USSR and to you [sic] own reform efforts.

So, it is our collective view that the Houston and London summits should make clear to public opinion everywhere that the U.S.-Soviet confrontation is over, and that, working together, we'll make a peaceful post-war world. Now if you have a minute more, I would like to tie this in to the NATO Summit.

President Gorbachev: Yes. I agree.

The President: I know you already received my message. I was gratified by your and Shevardnadze's comments on the actions taken in London. I remember your telling me when you were here in Washington that you would be watching the outcome of the NATO Summit. I hope you have seen the transformation of the NATO Alliance, and hope that is the way it was read in the Soviet Union.

So, what we tried to do was to take account of your concerns expressed to me and others, and we did it in the following ways: by our joint declaration on non-aggression; in our invitation to you to come to NATO; in our agreement to open NATO to regular diplomatic contact with your government and those of the Eastern European countries; and our offer on assurances on the future size of the armed forces of a united Germany—an issue I know you discussed with Helmut Kohl. We also fundamentally changed our military approach on conventional and nuclear forces. We conveyed the idea of an expanded, stronger CSCE with new institutions in which the USSR can share and be part of the new Europe.

We tried to shift the emphasis in the document to envisioning a Europe in which no power feels isolated. You know my view that NATO is a stabilizing force, especially with a unified Germany not isolated but as a full member. So what I tried to do there, and in our talks, and in my previous talks with Akhromeyev, was to show an Alliance adapting to new realities and not a threat to anyone. I should also mention that the paper from which NATO worked was a U.S. paper, and I am proud of my colleagues for this U.S. role. I hope that you can study it and that we can discuss it.

So, may I make two points in conclusion? As a politician, I watched with awe and respect the way you concluded and handled the party Congress. In Houston, we were supposed to be working on economic matters, but all of us watched with fascination your efforts to move on political and economic reform with perestroika. It is fair to say that all of us want you to succeed.

And a last point on economic matters. To coin a phrase, I don't want the Soviet people licking sugar through a glass. We have some constraints but we do want to help. I really mean that. I want you to get the benefit of the reform process. I think you know what I mean about licking sugar through a glass. That's my report.

President Gorbachev: Thank you, Mr. President. I thank you for what you have said. I will give a short response.

I would start with an issue you mentioned in the latter part of your talk—the results of the party Congress. I believe that through reasons you understand that the Communist Party remains a powerful political organization. Its position and actions will largely determine the course of events in our country. And it is only natural given the new situation and the period we are going through that the Communist Party has renounced its monopoly on power. New parties will emerge and new political public organizations will be created.

And my task, and that of my close colleagues on perestroika, was that this position taken by the Communist Party be more in line with the aims we have set in these reforms. At the moment, we have reached a stage when we are about to embark on major reforms on the economy and on a new federation between the republics. I have in mind new relations with the republics on economics and other matters.

I have to say, all-in-all, it was not an easy period for me. They were not easy days and nights. It was perhaps the most difficult and important period in my political life, but we have now achieved the tasks we set for ourselves.

And as a result of this, we now have a profound understanding in the party and in society of the need to have new, major changes. The most important aspect is that we create a social environment to undertake these reforms.

And I am also relating this to the results of the Houston meeting and the things you have just said. That is to say, we have to have ready by the end of the summer and early fall, a broadly defined program for transition to a market economy which could be begun as early as January 1, 1991. We'll have to make great efforts and perhaps in this sense we count on your cooperation.

There are two schools of thought. The one more current in the U.S. is that the less help given the Soviets, the better they will be able to carry out reforms. The other, to which we subscribe, is that if we have enough resources, including financial resources at this important stage in the development of a market economy,—enough resources, then we could move to a market economy. If we find we do not have enough resources and financial reserves, we will have to rely more on state-regulated measures. But I believe the second school of thought is more reasonable and substantiated. In this respect, I greet the positive tone of Houston under your Chairmanship.

Let me also say some words on the Kohl visit. We managed to bring our points of view closer together. And, in fact, the results take into consideration our common interests—of Germany, yours and ours. I believe that without the meeting in Washington and at Camp David, without the results of the NATO Summit and the London Declaration, without the major work in my conversation with Kohl and your talks with Kohl, without the activities of our foreign economic agencies, without this real political action it would have been difficult to arrive at the proximity in our points of view. We achieved all this because we understood each other's position. We tried to take into account each other's views. I consider the results of my conversation with Kohl to be quite positive.

I hope that Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary Baker will discuss specifically this particular subject. I believe they will discuss these specific points which are best not discussed in this phone conversation. If these agreements are respected, we could achieve positive results.

That is all I wanted to add. I agree with you that the development of this process make [sic] us hopeful that positive results will be achieved in Vienna and on the CSCE process and that there are good prospects for the CSCE meeting we have discussed.

And in conclusion, let me say I am glad to hear the voice of George Bush over the phone. Our conversation makes me hopeful for the future.

The President: Let's stay in touch. Congratulations with your agreement. I'll tell the press we had a constructive discussion about the Houston and NATO Summits.

President Gorbachev: Yes. I think we can do this in a short way—these two topics.

The President: All right, sir. Let's do it and it is nice to speak to you.

President Gorbachev: All the best, Mr. President. Good-bye.

The President: My best to Raisa.

President Gorbachev: Also, my best to Barbara. Good-bye.

The President: Good-bye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Chapter 8

THE HELSINKI SUMMIT, PARIS CSCE SUMMIT, AND THE WAR IN THE GULF, 1990

When Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the new post-Cold War relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union encountered its first real test. It was especially crucial for the Soviet side, confronting Mikhail Gorbachev with a difficult challenge to his foreign policy of new thinking. Would he abandon a traditional Soviet ally in the Middle East and side with his Cold War opponents—the United States and the U.N. coalition—or would he play the traditional superpower game, trying to undermine U.S. influence in the region? In the end, Gorbachev was able to rise above factional strife and show himself to be a true partner who consistently followed his liberal-internationalist ideas and stuck by the coalition. In the process, President George Bush tried to do everything to ensure Soviet support as key to creating and sustaining an effective international alliance. In the Persian Gulf, as in other issue-areas, U.S.-Soviet interaction proved to be central to ending the Cold War.

Two important summits took place during the period of the Gulf crisis—an unplanned gathering in Helsinki and the Paris meeting, which was supposed to be about post-Cold War European structures, but where the Gulf conflict remained the center of attention. Both summits seemed to confirm the new, unprecedented nature of the superpower relationship, combined with a high degree of Soviet involvement in—one might even say true integration into—Western political decision making and efforts to build new security structures and principles in Europe. This was also the period when, as a direct result of his successful interaction with the Soviet Union on the Persian Gulf, President Bush and Brent Scowcroft first talked about the concept of a “new world order.” That notion, dreamed up while fishing for bluefish off Kennebunkport on August 23, later became the key slogan for Bush’s vision of the post-Cold War system.¹ In this new world order, the two superpowers could be guarantors of international security, jointly involved in addressing cases of aggression and regional conflict.

In the months leading to the war in the Gulf, both the Soviet Union and the United States essentially reversed their traditional positions in the region. The Soviet power base always consisted of the anti-Israeli, anti-American Arab “rejectionist” states. Iraq was the most important member of this coalition, after Egypt, under Anwar Sadat, reoriented its policy toward the United States. Iraq under Saddam Hussein was a valuable commodity—a Third-World client that paid its debts. Baghdad bought large amounts of Soviet weapons, and employed

¹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 355.

a significant number of Soviet military specialists and engineers.² Still, in this case, the USSR decisively condemned the actions of its ally, steadfastly stood by the international coalition and voted for all U.N. resolutions. When the U.S. decided it was time for military action, its Soviet partner raised objections and tried to win time for diplomatic action, but ultimately fell in line.

Washington's behavior during the Persian Gulf crisis also differed significantly from its Cold War patterns. The United States traditionally maintained a policy of preventing the Soviet Union from playing a role in the Middle East, and not allowing a Soviet military presence in the Gulf. However, on the advice of Secretary of State James Baker, the U.S. suggested to the Soviets that they join a military coalition in the Gulf, and eventually agreed to Moscow's proposal for a joint Middle East peace conference. There was also internal opposition in the United States, which doubted Soviet motives in the Gulf and objected to Bush's willingness to allow the USSR entrée into the region. As Beschloss and Talbott pointed out, when Baker suggested to the State Department the idea of the Soviet Union contributing to the international coalition, "he provoked much the same kind of complaints that Shevardnadze had stirred in the Foreign Ministry. U.S. diplomats fired off memos warning that to invite the Soviet Union to send forces to the Gulf region was to discard four decades of diplomacy aimed at keeping the Soviets out."³

Things were changing fast on the U.S. side. As late as October 1989, National Security Directive (NSD) 26, "U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf," stated the following U.S. position:

"Access to Persian Gulf Oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to U.S. national security. The United States remains committed to defend its vital interests in the region, if necessary and appropriate through the use of U.S. military force, against the Soviet Union or any other regional power with interests inimical to our own."⁴ The same NSD recommended that "as a means of developing access to and influence with the Iraqi defense establishment, the United States should consider sales of non-lethal forms of military assistance, e.g., training courses and medical exchanges, on a case by case basis."⁵

Less than a year later, however, the Bush administration learned to trust Gorbachev and started seeing the bilateral relationship in less adversarial terms. The most important developments that intervened here were the Soviet withdrawal

² Different sources provide different numbers of Soviet citizens in Iraq. During his conversation with Bush in Helsinki, Gorbachev mentions 196 military specialists and over 3,000 Soviets overall living in Iraq. Karen Brutents, the International Department official responsible for the Middle East, gives the number as 8,000, which is probably exaggerated. Shevardnadze also mentions 8,000 in his memoir, while Evgeny Primakov, at the time the USSR's most respected Arabist, indicates the number was 5,000 in his memoir.

³ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 251.

⁴ National Security Directive 26, October 2, 1989, p. 1. Collections of the National Security Archive.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

from Afghanistan, the Malta summit, and the interaction with Gorbachev on German unification. As a result, the United States found itself having to cooperate with the principal power against which the NSD had stipulated the possible use of military force, and to push jointly against the regime with which the directive had proposed developing cooperation in the military sphere.

INVASION AND THE JOINT STATEMENT

When news of the invasion of Kuwait came, Shevardnadze and Baker were in Irkutsk, immersed in arms control discussions. The Soviet foreign minister was incredulous but not yet seriously concerned because all the information he had about Saddam Hussein led him to believe that the Iraqi dictator would not attempt a major invasion of the neighboring state.⁶ In fact, U.S. intelligence had not concluded that an invasion was imminent either, even though both the CIA and KGB had detected the concentration of Iraqi forces along the Kuwaiti border.

The superpowers' first major decision in the crisis was to issue a joint statement condemning the invasion and calling for an arms embargo and the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. This move would largely determine Moscow's future stance on the conflict. Gorbachev's own position was not immediately clear because he was already known to be a strong opponent of using force to resolve international conflicts. Even Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev's closest adviser, doubted that he would give his full support to the U.S. position because in the end it might lead to military action.⁷ Baker recalls in his memoir that "when [Dennis] Ross first surfaced the idea with me, I really did not believe that we could get a joint statement. The Soviets would be cautious; they'd want to talk to Baghdad, then wait and see. The Arabists in the Foreign Ministry would oppose a joint statement."⁸ And yet, the joint statement was signed on the basis of the American text drafted by Ross. For Washington, the decision was momentous, changing security calculations in the region. Baker called August 3, 1990, the day of the joint statement, "the day the cold war ended."⁹ He did not assign equal significance even to the unification of Germany, which was agreed upon that same summer.

During the negotiations, the U.S. side used the promise of the new superpower partnership as a lever. Baker later wrote that "if Shevardnadze resisted, I was prepared to say that our failure to agree on a worthwhile statement would be a painful reminder that the relationship between our nations wasn't what I had thought, and that I would have no choice but to relay that sobering conclusion to the President."¹⁰

⁶ Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 100.

⁷ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 283.

⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Immediately, opposition emerged in the Foreign Ministry, just as Baker had anticipated. But Shevardnadze was not the problem. Sergey Tarasenko, Shevardnadze's closest aide, recalled that the foreign minister had a "shouting match" with the Ministry's Middle East experts who protested the idea of going along with the Americans. The main criticisms, which were consistently voiced throughout the crisis, especially during the military stage, were as follows:

- Soviet support would only help the U.S. increase its military influence in the Gulf. American troops might remain permanently in Saudi Arabia.

- The Soviet Union would suffer a loss of prestige among its Arab allies, whom it had cultivated over 40 years.

- Iraq might take Soviet citizens hostage. There probably would be loss of life, and their blood would be on Gorbachev and Shevardnadze's hands.

- Iraq was a paying customer, an important source of hard currency. If the Soviet Union joined the United States, it would lose the massive investment it had made in Iraq. (Soviet officials anticipated a loss of approximately \$1.2 billion in trade and payments, primarily from tripartite oil deals between the USSR and Iraq for deliveries to Bulgaria, Romania, and India. It was also understood that Iraq would not be able to pay its debt, which was unofficially estimated to be between \$5 and \$20 billion.)

- Most of Iraq's weapons and military technology were of Soviet origin. Soviet military specialists helped train the troops. If war broke out, it would pit Soviet arms against American arms, and might undermine the image of the Soviet Army and Soviet military technology.

- "Marching under U.S. orders" against Iraq would be equivalent to "losing" the Middle East to the United States.¹¹

Gorbachev's position became even more difficult several days later, on August 6, when Washington informed him about the beginning of Operation Desert Shield—the massive U.S. naval and ground force deployment in the Gulf starting with 200,000 troops in Saudi Arabia. When Baker called Shevardnadze to get his reaction to the deployment, the Soviet foreign minister was gloomy. He had just had to go through the fight in his own agency, and in their discussions about the joint statement Baker had assured him that he would be consulted and that the United States was not seeking a military presence. Their actions, however, ran contrary to their assurances.¹² From the very beginning, the Soviets were afraid that the U.S. would press for a military solution and that this deployment would serve as a precedent for taking action without consulting the USSR anytime they suspected it would disagree with their option. Later, during his meeting with Bush in Helsinki on September 9, Gorbachev also tersely pointed out the difference between consulting the Soviet Union and simply informing it about the deployment.¹³

¹¹ Interview with Sergey Tarasenko, June 25, 1996, Moscow.

¹² Telcon, Baker-Shevardnadze, August 7, 1990.

¹³ Document No. 109.

Bush, meanwhile, shared none of Gorbachev's cautiousness about military force, believing from the very beginning that it might be the only way to thwart Saddam's ambitions in the region. Although he did not want to speak publicly about it, Bush recalled that he "could not see how we were going to remove Saddam Hussein without using force. ... I asked [Brent Scowcroft] impatiently when we could strike."¹⁴ He called Margaret Thatcher, who saw the situation in "remarkably similar ways" and was even more decisively in favor of the military option. Bush also called King Fahd since "Saudi Arabia would be indispensable to any military moves we might make, and might itself be in danger."¹⁵ Fahd on the one hand expressed a similar assessment, saying "I believe nothing will work with Saddam but use of force,"¹⁶ but on the other hand avoided an answer to Bush's offer to deploy TACAIR, which made Bush worry the Saudis were ready for a compromise. On August 4, the NSC meeting at Camp David concentrated on military options. Bush made numerous phone calls to world leaders—though not to Gorbachev, knowing about his strong objections. In his memoir, Bush wrote that Colin Powell "felt I really had declared war on Iraq that Sunday."¹⁷ However, there was still hope that a peaceful solution rooted in strong U.N. sanctions was possible. Furthermore, deciding on the military option so early on, according to Baker, would "lose the Soviets" and make it extremely difficult to attract needed international support. By the end of August, the U.S. position was based on working through the United Nations to reverse the aggression while simultaneously building a military coalition and preparing the legal ground for military action if Saddam did not comply with U.N. resolutions.

On the Soviet side, meanwhile, all efforts aimed at avoiding the military option. Only Shevardnadze shared the American belief that, whether it was desirable or not, Saddam Hussein could only be dealt with militarily. Baker pointed out the difference in attitudes in a memo to Bush: "While I think Shevardnadze is not enthusiastic about using force, he is more inclined to think it will have to be used eventually. For his part, Gorbachev's image of the new international order is such that he has a hard time reconciling the fact that we might need to use force in this initial test."¹⁸

At this point, Gorbachev turned to Yevgeny Primakov, the dean of Soviet Arabists, who now became the voice of internal opposition against acquiescing to Washington. Primakov was widely respected in the Soviet leadership and by Gorbachev personally. He wanted to negotiate with Saddam directly and to try to promote Soviet interests in the region by playing an independent peacemaker role. Echoing his colleagues, he emphasized that the Soviet Union had a treaty of

¹⁴ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 353.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹⁶ Bush-Fahd Memcon, August 2, 1990, Bush Presidential Library. http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/memcons_telcons/1990-08-02—Fahd.pdf.

¹⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 333.

¹⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 313.

friendship with Iraq, and should base its response to the aggression on the obligations contained in that treaty. He suspected that the United States was already bent on a military solution and mistrusted Baker's assurances that Bush was not in favor of using force against Iraq. Another big concern of Primakov and other Arabists was that Soviet support for the American position against an Arab state would result in serious discontent among the Muslim population of Central Asia. This argument carried great weight at a time when nationalist movements threatened to tear the Soviet Union apart, an issue of a special concern for Gorbachev.¹⁹

Primakov promoted an idea that strongly appealed to Gorbachev and the majority of the political leadership at the time: Moscow could offer a comprehensive Middle East solution if Saddam would cooperate and if the Americans would agree to the Soviet plan. This was the concept of the "invisible" package as the basis for the Soviet peace plan: Saddam would announce the unconditional withdrawal of troops, but would be given assurances that after the pullout members of the U.N. Security Council would immediately initiate a genuine process for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, they would commit to a new security structure in the Middle East, in which the Soviet Union would finally assume the role of leading peacemaker and partner of the United States.²⁰

Primakov did not see the situation in the same moral terms as Shevardnadze, and in his memoir he specifically mentions his response to the foreign minister's moral appeals, pointing out that not negotiating with Saddam was actually an immoral act because it would endanger the lives of Soviet citizens in Iraq.²¹ Primakov was also categorically against using force, which made Gorbachev especially receptive to his arguments. The Soviet leader decided to make Primakov his personal envoy on the Persian Gulf crisis, a move that infuriated Shevardnadze and created a split between him and Gorbachev.

Throughout the fall of 1990, Primakov made repeated missions to Iraq, other Arab countries, and Washington. Even though his strategic goal was the same as the Americans' proclaimed objective—to persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait without a war—he was widely seen as trying to undermine the coalition's common stance against Saddam. The cautiousness of Gorbachev and his willingness to explore this "two-channel" approach signaled his precarious political situation in addition to his ambivalence in the face of a potential military conflict.

The Helsinki Summit

The next important step in forming the international coalition against Iraq's aggression occurred on September 9, 1990, in Helsinki. The meeting was called on short notice at Bush's initiative. The president's top priority for the session

¹⁹ For a detailed account of Primakov's view of the crisis, see Primakov, *Minnoe pole politiki*, pp. 61–86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

was to maintain close cooperation between the Soviet and U.S. leaderships in order to keep pressure on Saddam Hussein.²² Pre-summit analyses on the American side showed that the USSR was in serious economic trouble and pointed to Gorbachev's inability to implement the center's decisions in the context of "deepening fissures in the union" and his tensions with "bolder republic leaders," especially Yeltsin.²³ On the other hand, a CIA assessment of Soviet goals in regional policy concluded that Gorbachev's priority in conflicts such as in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Cambodia was actually to "sustain the momentum in Moscow's growing relationship with the United States and the West." On the Persian Gulf especially, "Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have demonstrated the extent to which the USSR now gives priority to its relations with the West." The CIA document also notes Gorbachev's desire for a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement, concern about the use of force and a preference to act through the United Nations.²⁴ Two main themes emerge from these documents—the importance of the U.S.-Soviet partnership for Gorbachev and his need to address the domestic crisis.

This probably was the most harmonious summit for Gorbachev and Bush, the point when they began to call each other by their first names, and when Gorbachev fully embraced the concept of the "new world order" as congruent with his vision of the post-Cold War international system. Gorbachev brought Primakov and Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev to the meeting, both of whom were deeply concerned about the disastrous consequences of a possible military course of action and determined to prevent Gorbachev from making unnecessary concessions to the United States that might lead to the use of force. Gorbachev also brought a comprehensive settlement plan, which included a number of steps for troop withdrawal and the subsequent removal of sanctions, but most importantly an international conference on the Middle East as a direct outcome of the crisis.

The summit consisted of two long sessions. In the first, the leaders discussed the Gulf crisis and made several important breakthroughs. Bush opened with praise for U.S.-Soviet cooperation on Iraq and said he saw "a possibility for a new world order—out of this crisis and tragedy could emerge new opportunities." He expressed hope that "as the result of these talks you could tell Saddam Hussein" that if the coalition countries were compelled to use force, Gorbachev would "support these efforts." Then Bush offered important assurances, welcomed by the Soviet leader, on the status of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia: "We do not aim to keep American troops in the Gulf on a permanent basis. This is not one of the intentions behind the American presence in the Gulf. ... Frankly, the American people would not support such plans."

²² Document No. 108.

²³ *Gorbachev's Position and the Soviet Domestic Scene*, CIA, SOVA, September 4, 1990, Bush Presidential Library.

²⁴ *Underlying Goals in Soviet Regional Policies: The Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Cambodia*, CIA, SOVA, September 6, 1990. Bush Presidential Library.

Bush then proceeded to the most important point of his statement, the announcement of a crucial change in U.S. policy toward the USSR, which turned out to be not only the high point of the summit for Gorbachev but a decisive moment in the relationship:

And now, to put all my cards on the table, I would like to say the following. For a long time, during the “Cold War” years, U.S. policy was that the Soviet Union should not play any role in the Middle East. ... I want to assure you that the former U.S. position on the Soviet Union’s involvement in the Middle East affairs has changed. The new order, which I hope can be created after this instability, presupposes that the United States and Soviet Union will apply more positive collaborative efforts to regulate not only this problem, but the rest of the issues in the Middle East.²⁵

Bush finished his presentation on the high note of a promise of real and lasting partnership, which pleased the Soviet leader more than anything else: “Mr. President, I appeal to you as a respected friend, an equal, an important partner and participant in the events whose role is quite significant. Let us look to the future, with an understanding that we are talking about more than the current problem, we are talking about very great things.”

And so, ambushed by this unprecedented talk of partnership and assurances about the American presence in the Gulf, Gorbachev had the feeling that his priorities had already been addressed before he had even presented his plan. It was “Mission Accomplished” in terms of being accepted as a partner in the Middle East and in building the new world order. Moreover, to his ears the phrase about further collaboration on the Middle East sounded like Bush would have no problem with convening a conference on the region—a key Soviet objective.

Gorbachev then launched into a detailed presentation. He remarked on the fruitful cooperation so far, with the exception of the U.S. deployment in Saudi Arabia, on which the Soviets had not been consulted, and Bush accepted the criticism, saying only that the troops had been sent at the request of Saudi Arabia. The Soviet leader then reiterated what he had heard Bush say—that the U.S. was not striving for a permanent military presence in the Gulf and that he would prefer a non-military solution to the crisis. Gorbachev again strongly emphasized his opposition to a military course of action, except “if Iraq attacks Saudi Arabia or Jordan. In all other cases, the use of force should be ruled out.”

The Soviet plan included the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and their replacement by inter-Arab forces under the U.N. flag; a reduction of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia; suspension of U.N. resolutions; and their revocation after a full Iraqi pullout. The culmination of the plan was an international conference that would discuss Kuwait’s independence along with other regional issues, including Palestine and Lebanon. The final element of the Soviet proposal seemed to follow logically

²⁵ Document No. 109.

from Bush's statement on Soviet and U.S. collaboration in the Middle East, made just minutes before: "At this conference we could also discuss the question of creating a security system that would be guaranteed by the Soviet Union, the United States, and the five permanent members of the Security Council." Nothing in Gorbachev's statement diverged from the vision Bush had presented.

In response, Bush said that although he agreed to some of these points, he was concerned that Saddam would feel like he had achieved his objectives in Kuwait. But Gorbachev disagreed, pointing to the complete and unconditional withdrawal called for in the Soviet plan. In fact, for Gorbachev, it was the United States that had already achieved a strategic victory in the conflict—with the U.N. resolutions, international condemnation of Iraqi aggression, and the international coalition firmly behind U.S. policy in the region. There was no need any longer for military action. Bush had repeated, "I want to assure you once again that we are in favor of a peaceful resolution," to which the Soviet leader responded, "It would be madness to take military action against Iraq if it does not take any new military steps itself." Gorbachev then pressed his counterpart to move on the proposed plan: "Can we make some kind of decisions here about a plan? No. But if we do nothing, then why meet at all?" Several times during the conversation, Bush insisted, "I agree with everything you said," yet he was not prepared to make commitments regarding the Soviet plan. The two agreed instead to let their experts examine the proposals. Bush asked Gorbachev to make a joint statement urging Iraq to comply with all U.N. resolutions as a condition for ending its international isolation. But the statement did not mention the international conference on the Middle East—a linkage advocated by Primakov.

At the same time, Bush privately promised that the U.S. would agree to a Soviet-American sponsored conference after the crisis was over. This was crucially important to Gorbachev because, once again, even if not formally included in the statement, it signaled a reversal of America's 45-year policy of trying to keep the Soviets out of the Middle East. Bush also repeated his assurances about avoiding military force and departing Saudi Arabia after the crisis. So in a way, even though there would be no direct linkage to the conference in the Middle East, the first meeting felt like it brought several major accomplishments to Gorbachev. That made him willing to compromise on the final text of the joint statement, which, in the view of Soviet experts, was significantly watered down compared to the initial draft, and did not include major elements of the Soviet plan.²⁶

In the second session of the summit, Gorbachev no longer pressed the Americans to adopt his plan. This turnaround was "astounding" for the U.S. participants, according to Scowcroft: "Gone, virtually without a trace, was the Gorbachev of the morning defending his Iraqi client. It was, to me, an amazing—and exceedingly reassuring—turnabout. We had narrowly escaped a crisis."²⁷

²⁶ Brutents, *Nesbyvsheesya*, p. 527.

²⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 368.

Transcripts of the Helsinki summit are fascinating for what they show about how much the Persian Gulf crisis meant for the U.S.-Soviet relationship beyond just cooperating to repel an aggression. Both sides framed the issue as a test of the emerging world order and of the sincerity of Soviet intentions. In a most unusual way, Gorbachev saw a direct link between the superpower status of the Soviet Union and its support of the United States in the Gulf. To be a partner with Washington in this conflict was a way of salvaging superpower status at a time when his country was approaching economic collapse. In Tarasenko's words, "we were sinking as a state, the status of great power was only in our memory. The only way for us to hold on as a great power was to hitch ourselves to the American locomotive."²⁸

The second afternoon session was devoted to various issues, but mainly the Soviet internal situation and specific problems surrounding the next steps in economic reform. This was the deepest discussion so far of Soviet economic needs, and the United States' positive engagement on all the issues raised by Gorbachev was unprecedented in the bilateral relationship. The difficulties facing the Moscow leadership were enormous. Gorbachev said he had made the choice for radical reform but now had to "hold the society together," reflecting his concern over the inevitable rise in inflation and unemployment that would result from price liberalization and a reduction in the money supply. He spoke about the need to gain the consensus of the republics' leaders for any economic measures. The embattled leader made it clear to Bush that he was hoping for American economic assistance and political support: "We are speaking of a need for help. The numbers are not great, and we are not asking for grants, just loans that we will pay back with interest. The coming 3–5 months will be critical. Your position will be of great importance."²⁹

Baker, who was about to lead a group of senior U.S. businessmen to Moscow, spoke about opening new horizons in the area of developing energy reserves and hydrocarbon processing. He mentioned negotiations on an investment treaty. Scowcroft cited a joint civil aviation project where "the Soviet Union would provide the body, the U.S. the engine and the Israelis the avionics." President Bush spoke optimistically about other joint projects that could be carried out. He made clear his limits: "As you know, we don't have the cash for large economic assistance." At the same time, he vaguely hinted at bigger things in the future: "I don't want to be under false colors, but the climate for cooperation is continuing. ... We have some constraints, but out of this new order we can find a way."³⁰ This again was something Gorbachev wanted to hear; his need for U.S. economic support was as great as ever, even if it did not involve direct financial aid. Matlock suggests in his memoir that Gorbachev made his concessions on Gulf policy, aware

²⁸ Interview with Tarasenko, June 25, 1996, Moscow.

²⁹ Document No. 110.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

that the “American willingness to be supportive of reform in the Soviet Union might not survive Soviet opposition to Western policy in the Gulf.”³¹

The summit ended with a joint statement that included reaffirmation of U.S. and Soviet resolve in the Gulf, a signal of Soviet support for further actions if Saddam did not fully comply with U.N. resolutions, and only a very vague hint of future cooperation on the Middle East. Soviet hopes for economic support did not materialize; Bush had offered nothing more in real terms than a further normalization of economic relations, along with distant promises of better things to come. On the flight home, the U.S. president was in an “expansive mood” and told his aides he felt “elated.”³² A day later he told Chancellor Kohl, “We got everything we wanted.”³³

Buildup for U.N. Resolution 678 and searching for alternatives.

In the months after the Helsinki summit, both the American and the Soviet sides tried to pursue their respective priorities in the Gulf against rising domestic opposition. In the U.S. Congress, Senator Sam Nunn convened televised hearings on the administration’s policy in the Gulf. His position was that the United States should limit itself to sanctions, even if it took a couple of years, but not resort to military force. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he posed a real obstacle to the administration’s plans. On the Soviet side, the situation was even more complicated, and paradoxical. Most of the Supreme Soviet and the majority in the Soviet leadership, including Gorbachev himself, opposed the use of force and an increased American presence in the Gulf, but Gorbachev also felt the need to try as hard as he could to maintain his partnership with the United States while finding a non-military solution. Primakov argued that Gorbachev could allow himself more flexibility and freedom of action if he played the role of superpower peacemaker distinct from the United States. That way the USSR would not be seen as being mentored by the United States internationally, maintain its allies in the Arab world, and consequentially drive a better bargain with Washington in terms of economic assistance, if that was the issue.

In pursuit of this goal, Gorbachev allowed Primakov to set off on an international mission to persuade European and American leaders that a Soviet “peace plan,” which would give Saddam a “face saving” opportunity and accomplish the goal of the international coalition—the unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait—without a war. During this mission Primakov worked directly at cross-purposes with the foreign minister, making Shevardnadze’s political position at home even more vulnerable.

³¹ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 412.

³² Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 257.

³³ Bush-Kohl Telcon, September 11, 1990, Bush Presidential Library.

Shevardnadze felt that Primakov was undermining his authority by acting on issues that were entirely in the domain of the foreign minister without even a pretense of consultation. Primakov went directly to Gorbachev, bypassing Shevardnadze, and insisted that he should go on an independent peace mission. According to Tarasenko, the foreign minister was furious that Gorbachev actually consented against his vocal opposition. This was when Shevardnadze began to think about resignation.³⁴

In early November pressure started to build for adopting a U.N. resolution that would authorize the use of force if all other means failed. Secretary Baker traveled to Moscow and met with Gorbachev on November 8. Although he came to try to persuade Gorbachev of the need for such a resolution, he also gave the Soviet leader additional assurances that the United States did not intend to keep up its military presence in the region: "We want every single one of the American soldiers to return home as soon as possible. We envision keeping only the naval presence in the Gulf that has been there for several decades. ... We do not want a military solution because we would have to suffer the heaviest casualties."³⁵ Gorbachev responded, emphasizing the need to keep the United Nations at the center of each and every decision on Iraq. Part of why the Soviet leader eventually agreed to the resolution authorizing military force was that at least it retained decision-making on Iraq firmly in the hands of the international institution—which was at the core of his thinking on the new international order.

While both leaders tried to build a consensus and defend their Persian Gulf policies at home, they managed to attain an unusual level of bilateral cooperation. A notable example occurred when Shevardnadze warned his State Department counterparts about the Primakov mission to Washington on October 18 via his aides, and encouraged them to disregard Primakov's "peace plan," which they gladly agreed to do.³⁶ As Beschloss and Talbott emphasized, "it was yet another watershed in the relationship between the two countries: the Soviet Foreign Minister and the U.S. State Department were conspiring to undermine the Kremlin's special envoy."³⁷

Another important episode occurred on November 8, when at Baker's initiative General Howard Graves gave Shevardnadze a classified briefing on the U.S. war plan and the state of readiness of American forces. Baker described the event in his memoir as "an extraordinary exchange of military information from one former foe to another. In another era, it would have been the most far-fetched thing imaginable that a high-ranking U.S. military officer would be authorized to brief the Soviet Foreign Minister on our war plans against a Soviet client state."³⁸

³⁴ Interview with Tarasenko, June 25, 1996, Moscow.

³⁵ Conversation between Gorbachev and Baker, November 8, 1990, Moscow, AGF, Fond 1, Opis 1.

³⁶ Interview with Tarasenko, June 25, 1996, Moscow.

³⁷ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 274.

³⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 310.

The Paris Summit

On November 17 Gorbachev arrived in Paris for the summit he hoped would be the realization of his dream—a common European home built on the structures of the CSCE and envisioning the dissolution of both military blocs. The summit produced the Paris Charter for a New Europe, popularly described as covering Vancouver to Vladivostok. The meeting also resulted in the decision to institutionalize the CSCE and the long-awaited signing of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). While the ceremonial aspect of the summit was important, and the conversation about the future of European institutions was needed, Gorbachev understood that after Germany's unification in NATO, and the German-French understanding on the need to build strong Western European integration, his vision of a common European home would no longer be taken seriously in the West. For the United States, the European forum represented above all an opportunity to solidify support for further measures against Iraq. As Bush put it in his memoir, "what should have been a historic occasion was overshadowed by the threat of war."³⁹ In Bush and Gorbachev's conversations with various leaders, Iraq was a top priority, including the need to adopt U.N. Security Council Resolution 678 authorizing "all necessary means," understood by all to signify that the military option was now the centerpiece on the table.

Margaret Thatcher took an especially hard line on Iraq in Paris. She called for more decisive steps to remove Saddam and destroy his army. When Gorbachev asked if she felt any chance for a political solution was left, she told him that in her view the United States was too cautious and what was needed was a ground war: "[Y]ou cannot return territory by air strikes. We need armored troops, artillery, that is why we are sending not only ships, but tanks, the entire armored brigade. ... Maybe we will have to act even earlier." Gorbachev, however, cautioned that "it would be worse than Vietnam. When one enters a country, one has to have some idea about how they are going to leave it." He predicted a long and bloody conflict that would alienate populations and leave the Middle East a zone of turmoil for years.⁴⁰

For Bush and Gorbachev, Paris was a direct continuation of their conversations at Helsinki. It was symbolic that in speaking with his main international partner Gorbachev made virtually no mention of his European vision. There were two themes—Soviet economic reform and the attendant need for U.S. aid, and the conflict in the Gulf, more specifically the U.S. need for Soviet support of the U.N. resolution authorizing force. Bush opened the meeting expressing genuine concern and reassurance: "I am glad to see you. I think about you all the time. You are living through a difficult time. Of course, I do not want to meddle in

³⁹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 407.

⁴⁰ Conversation between Gorbachev and Thatcher, November 20, 1990, Paris, AFG, Fond 1, Opus 1.

your internal affairs in any way, but let me say this: we will try to do anything we can in order to help you in this difficult task.”⁴¹ Gorbachev had traveled to Paris immediately after a very stormy session of the Supreme Soviet on November 18, during which he was blasted by conservatives and democrats alike for the lack of results from economic reform. He described for Bush the danger of instability in the country, and hinted that he might have to resort to unpopular courses of action in the near future: “we will have to use methods resembling harsh administrative measures, so that we do not allow the unfolding processes to descend into chaos. Everybody had to resort to such methods at crucial turning points in history, including President Roosevelt.”⁴²

Turning to the Persian Gulf, Bush appealed to Gorbachev’s abhorrence of war, telling him about his visit to U.S. military bases in Germany and looking into the eyes of young soldiers. He then made an appeal: “I need your help on this issue. We must push for a U.N. resolution, which would sanction necessary measures, i.e. use of force, so that we can persuade Saddam Hussein that he must comply with U.N. demands.” Bush talked about the solid support he was enjoying at home and assured Gorbachev again: “I do not want to use force. However, I have come to the conclusion that such a resolution is needed. And, thinking about how we want to build our relations for the future, I believe that your support would serve as clear evidence of our partnership. This is why I am asking you to help me.”⁴³ In response, the Soviet leader reassured Bush that he could not abandon his partner at such a critical juncture and that he had decided to support the U.N. resolution. But at the same time, he warned strongly against using force. Assuming Bush was committed to a peaceful outcome, he saw Resolution 678 as another step in increasing pressure on Saddam rather than as an actual green light for a military strike. At that moment, Soviet diplomacy was very active in the countries of the Middle East. Primakov believed he could get Saddam to back down, and Gorbachev essentially agreed, thinking it was just a question of time.

Gorbachev’s discussions at the Paris summit with other leaders—Brian Mulroney, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand—also focused on the Gulf crisis as the top international issue. In each conversation he argued against using force and in favor of strong international solidarity led by the United Nations, which in his mind would lead to more lasting results—especially resolution of the larger, festering conflict in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the main U.S. objective with European leaders at the summit was to build strong support for the use of force resolution and not allow Saddam an opportunity to split the coalition with gambits such as releasing hostages.

⁴¹ Document No. 116.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Moving toward a military solution

Soviet backing for the resolution proved indispensable for creating a powerful international partnership willing and capable of reversing the Iraqi attack. From the first day of the invasion through the end of the ground war the Soviet Union provided unwavering support to the U.S.-led coalition, and was Washington's main partner. Ironically, the importance of Moscow's cooperation declined once the use-of-force resolution passed, because most of its leverage had come from its ability to prevent military action, or otherwise to undermine American efforts in the region.

After passage of Resolution 678, the United States carefully watched events unfold in the Soviet Union where Gorbachev, under criticism for the failure of his domestic reform and for his entanglement with the United States in the Gulf, steadily moved towards the conservatives and abandoned his democratic allies. On December 18, a senior group on Soviet contingencies headed by Condoleezza Rice described the situation in the country as "a creeping crackdown," and a CIA analysis noted that Gorbachev had taken a "significant turn to the right."⁴⁴ Just two days later, their worries escalated with the sudden resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze, who had warned about the coming dictatorship. His departure was a reaction to what he saw as Gorbachev's growing reliance on conservative leaders like Yazov and Kryuchkov, but also, in a large part, to his treatment by Gorbachev during the Gulf crisis. Now the U.S. pondered what their reaction should be in the event of a serious conservative backlash in the USSR. A Scowcroft memo to the president on December 21 outlined possible scenarios and options, pointing quite accurately to the increased possibility of violence in the Baltics, where the army might "take advantage of the tense environment to create a pretext for the use of force. ... [A]n incident could flare without Gorbachev's knowledge or acquiescence." This was exactly what happened three weeks later. However, the memo concluded that while Gorbachev might have to take harsh steps to hold the Union together, "we will most certainly have the task of continuing our geostrategic cooperation with the Soviet Union—particularly in the Gulf—in the face of the rapid unraveling of the Soviet leadership's commitment to internal reform."⁴⁵

Meanwhile, as the New Year (1991) rolled in and U.S. intentions were becoming more clear, Gorbachev tried desperately to keep his American partners from initiating military action, hoping at the same time to persuade Saddam to agree to a full and unconditional withdrawal. In January 1991, Gorbachev created an emergency group on the Persian Gulf, which included Primakov, Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, and KGB head Vladimir Kryuchkov but also Gorbachev's most liberal adviser, Anatoly Chernyaev. The Soviet leader spent hours on the phone with European leaders and with Bush trying to persuade them to

⁴⁴ Memorandum from Condoleezza Rice to Robert Gates, November 18, 1990, Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁵ "Responding to the Toughening Line in Moscow," Memorandum to the President from Brent Scowcroft, December 21, 1990, Bush Presidential Library.

give negotiations a chance. In his conversations with Bush, Gorbachev spoke about loss of life and economic destruction, while also agreeing that Saddam's position was untenable and that he was not responding to diplomatic overtures. Gorbachev tried to postpone the start of the air campaign but then, once it started, agreed it had been inevitable because of Saddam's intransigence.⁴⁶

As early as January, the United States saw Gorbachev's efforts to work out a peaceful solution as a problem and a nuisance. Washington was concerned that Saddam might actually comply with U.N. resolutions, which would undermine the grounds for Desert Storm. Gorbachev's entreaties added to U.S. concerns and there was very little talk of the partnership. Scowcroft in his memoir speaks about Gorbachev's mediating efforts with condescension, and tellingly admits: "we could not let him interfere with our Gulf diplomacy or our operations at a critical moment."⁴⁷

The fact that the USSR's value as a partner had declined, and that the Soviet leaders were only informed rather than consulted about important military and political moves made even some reformers skeptical about U.S. intentions in the Gulf. Some felt deeply frustrated that the United States was still playing a geo-political game while demanding Soviet cooperation. Chernyaev's reaction when he heard the news of the beginning of the ground war was characteristic of the exasperation of policy makers who were deeply committed to new thinking and a new vision of world order. In his diary he wrote about Gorbachev's last efforts to persuade Western leaders not to start the ground offensive after Saddam had agreed to withdraw troops on February 22, during Tariq Aziz's visit to Moscow: "[The West was] deliberately confusing [Gorbachev]. Sometimes he felt it, but continued to believe that the criteria of the new thinking would work, that trust meant something. Not in this case! What had worked was the traditional logic of politics: might, riches, interests determine what is right. And it is not that hard to find a moral explanation for actions against Hussein."⁴⁸

Gorbachev was incensed at this treatment at the time and complained bitterly to other leaders such as Rajiv Gandhi.⁴⁹ But in retrospect, he came to a more measured conclusion in his memoir: "I knew that George Bush in his heart wanted to use the occasion to crush Saddam's regime with all military might. But he was also ready for a political settlement, although without compromises. However, Hussein, by his ambitious, insolent actions, which aggravated [his] illegal aggression, 'helped' the U.S. President to carry out the military option."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Document Nos. 120 and 121, among other examples.

⁴⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 470.

⁴⁸ Anatoly Chernyaev's diary, February 25, 1991.

⁴⁹ Gorbachev-Gandhi memcon, February 23, 1991, Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1.

⁵⁰ Gorbachev, *Ponyat' perestroiku*, p. 287.

Document No. 105: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Baker–Shevardnadze, 1:29 p.m.

August 7, 1990

Baker calls Shevardnadze to hear his reaction to the U.S. decision to deploy forces in Saudi Arabia as a deterrent to Saddam Hussein's assault on Kuwait, which was the subject of a message from Baker to Shevardnadze delivered that same day by Ambassador Matlock. Shevardnadze wonders "what he was being consulted about" if the decision has already been made and the deployment is about to begin. Just days earlier, on August 3, in a joint statement condemning the Iraqi invasion, Baker and Shevardnadze agreed to consult about the next steps. The Americans also assured the Soviets they would avoid using military force in the region at all costs. Gorbachev was furious because to agree to the joint statement he had to go against the advice of his experts and put the lives of about 5,000 Soviet citizens working in Iraq at risk. The Soviets were especially concerned about the consequences of stationing any outside military in the region or relying on a military response. Shevardnadze emphasizes that "the Soviet Union would consider this action exceptional, extraordinary and temporary and any military forces should leave as quickly as possible." On the phone with Shevardnadze, Baker says that the action is being taken in response to a request from Saudi Arabia. However, Bush's memoir makes it clear that the reluctant Saudis had to be persuaded to accept the deployment, which was in fact a U.S. idea.⁵¹

Subject: The Secretary's Telephone Conversation with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze

The Secretary wanted to make sure Shevardnadze had received the message Ambassador Matlock had delivered earlier in the day. He stressed that the actions described in the message were taken purely for Saudi Arabia's defensive needs. The Secretary said he was leaving on Wednesday (8/8) for Ankara at the President's request to consult with the Government of Turkey. On Friday, the Secretary will be in Brussels for a NATO meeting. He said he would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Soviet Ambassador in Brussels to brief him. The Secretary also raised the possibility of a multinational naval force to prevent the export of Iraq and Kuwait oil if the U.N. resolution on sanctions is not effective. He asked if the Soviets would have an interest in participating in such an effort.

Shevardnadze asked if a decision on the matters raised in the message had already been taken. The Secretary said the President had reached the decision yesterday evening (8/6). Shevardnadze then wondered what he was being consulted

⁵¹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 327–329, 335.

about. He reminded the Secretary of their airport conversation in which he had asked the Secretary not to rely on military force. He stressed that the Soviet approach had not changed. He said that after the second U.N. resolution on sanctions Iraq should have been given the opportunity to tell the world its attitude on the document.

Shevardnadze said it is very difficult to say what the consequences of the American action will be. The Soviet Union would consider this action exceptional, extraordinary and temporary and any military forces should leave as quickly as possible. He added that the Soviets are prepared to discuss any future plans and ideas, and suggested the military staff committee of the U.N. Security Council as a possible forum. He also noted that the Soviet Ambassador in Brussels would be prepared to meet with the Secretary in Brussels.

The Secretary replied that only one thing had been decided and there are still many other multilateral efforts to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression which have not been decided. He said no offensive actions were planned—it was strictly to deter; the decision was taken at the request of the Saudis; the U.S. considered this an extraordinary matter; and the assistance would remain only as long as the Saudis wanted it. In keeping with their airport conversation, the Secretary assured Shevardnadze that the U.S. does not intend to strike at Iraq, but the U.S. reserves the right to protect its citizens, and to defend Saudi Arabia and the free flow of oil.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0842-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 106: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

August 20, 1990

In this letter, Bush expresses his appreciation for Gorbachev's support for the international coalition against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The president mentions that something truly unprecedented is occurring—"Jim Baker is discussing with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze Soviet participation in a multinational naval force to enforce the U.N.-mandated economic sanctions levied against Iraq and Kuwait." Throughout the Cold War U.S. policy has been to try to keep the Soviet Union out of the Middle East. Now, as symbolic proof that the Cold War has, indeed, ended, Bush invites Soviet military participation to enforce a U.N. decision alongside U.S. and other Western forces. The rest of the conversation focuses on the subject Gorbachev wants badly to discuss—economic assistance—but no concrete commitments are made.

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your recent letter which I read with great interest. Before turning to the many issues that you raised, I want to note my satisfaction that we have been able to cooperate effectively, both bilaterally and especially in execution of our duties as members of the United Nations Security Council, at this difficult time in the Persian Gulf. I believe that our joint statement was a significant step forward in the development of a productive U.S.-Soviet relationship. I am hopeful that we can continue to work together to do all that is needed to repel Iraq's aggression and achieve the objectives laid out by the United Nations.

I took note of your strong words condemning the Iraqi action in your August 17 speech at Odessa. We now must all do our part—having worked together to secure their passage—to ensure the strictest observance of the U.N. resolutions, particularly UNSC Resolution 661. In that regard, Jim Baker is discussing with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze Soviet participation in a multinational naval force to enforce the U.N.-mandated economic sanctions levied against Iraq and Kuwait. I hope too that your government will join with others in collective efforts to secure the safe passage of the innocent nationals of several countries who are still inside Kuwait and Iraq. This, and the protection of the lives of the diplomats serving in the region, are high priorities for the United States. We are coordinating our efforts with the European Community and hope that you will be willing to do the same.

Turning to our economic relationship, I am pleased that you found the decisions taken by the United States and its G-7 partners at Houston to be helpful. As you know, the G-7 countries agreed to study closely how best to contribute to effective economic reform in the Soviet Union. The study that the international economic organizations have launched, at the request of the G-7, should help us

all to understand better the problems that you face and what can be done to address them. As you know, Secretary of State Baker and Secretary of Commerce Mosbacher will bring a delegation of senior businessmen with them to Moscow in September. I believe that this initiative, coupled with my recent decision to remove the ceiling on the number of Soviet business people who are permitted to live and work in the U.S., will serve to strengthen and expand commercial relations between our two countries.

My Administration is also currently examining ways to expand and focus our technical cooperation projects in a few key areas, for example food processing and distribution, energy exploration, and the development of the financial sector. We will continue to look for areas of common interest, including perhaps housing. I also believe that cooperation in the field of economic education will have considerable pay-offs, particularly in the long-term. Jim Baker will have some further ideas on this when he comes to Moscow in September, and we would look forward as well to hearing your views.

I continue to watch closely the exciting changes taking place in your country. Our experience here has taught us that pluralism is nothing to fear, but rather to foster and embrace. Our contacts with democratic forces outside of Moscow should be interpreted as an effort to understand better the entire range of opinion in your country.

We have accomplished a great deal in the past year, and I look forward to the remaining tasks. I fully agree with your assessment that we have laid the foundations for further mutual cooperation, and am confident that a new era of peaceful relations lies ahead. Sincerely,

George Bush [Signed]

[*George H.W. Bush Library, George Bush Handwriting File.*]

Document No. 107: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

August 29, 1990

After the August 3 joint U.S.-Soviet statement condemning the Iraqi aggression, Bush is determined to keep Gorbachev on board and have him play an active role in the coalition. He also believes that "it is important that the two of us are seen, hopefully, in agreement on the major question of the Persian Gulf." Bush is planning a major address to the nation the week of September 10 and wants to showcase the unity with Gorbachev in order to solidify his domestic support. In this letter, he invites Gorbachev on very short notice to meet informally in Geneva or in Finland to discuss their cooperation on the Gulf. Gorbachev chooses Helsinki.

Dear Mr. President:

I have been thinking a lot lately about U.S.-Soviet relations. I am very pleased with the way in which we have been able to work together at the U.N. in the face of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. I truly believe that the actions taken by the United Nations will not only revitalize that organization, but will be recorded as truly historic and meaningful.

I remember our meeting at Camp David. We talked there about getting together more frequently and about talking informally without an agenda.

With those conversations in mind, I am wondering if you would be able to meet me in Switzerland or possibly Finland for one day of talks. I am very anxious to discuss the Middle East crisis with you, and, of course we can discuss many other subjects as well.

I think such a meeting, showing the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. staying in touch, working together on a major problem sends a very good signal around the globe.

For your very private information, I am planning a speech to the American people early in the week of September 10th. In that speech I will discuss the Persian Gulf crisis. Our meeting should come before that speech, so I can report to the American people on our meeting and on U.S.-Soviet cooperation.

Thus, I propose that we meet on either Friday, September 7th or Saturday, September 8th.

Regrettably, I would not be able to meet later on in September due to our domestic budget matters. In fact, I had to cancel a long scheduled South American trip planned for mid-September.

I would suggest small meetings (similar to Camp David format). A proposed schedule might look like the following:

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Meeting (3 or 4 on each side)

1:30 p.m. – Lunch (8 or 9 on each side)

2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.—Meeting (3 or 4 on each side)

5:00 p.m. – Joint Press Conference and Departure

I have been staying in close personal touch with world leaders over the first two weeks of the Gulf crisis. I feel it is important that the two of us are seen, hopefully, in agreement on the major question of the Persian Gulf, but in any event having frank and serious personal contact. Perhaps it is better, given the short time span of the meetings, that the wives not accompany us; but if Raisa wishes to be there, I am confident Barbara will enthusiastically attend. Either way is fine with me.

As to location—our mutual friend Sadruddin Khan once offered his lovely home on Lake Geneva as a meeting place. From a security standpoint, it would be perfect, and I am sure he would agree to letting us meet there. He knows nothing of this proposal, however. If Finland were preferable to you, I expect their President would be most agreeable to providing a good place to meet.

I realize that this is very short notice, but that, too, has great appeal to me. As things dramatically change around the world, we should now, more than ever, be in close contact.

I would appreciate your letting me know as soon as possible if this idea of a meeting in early September has appeal to you.

Sincerely yours, *with personal best wishes* –
George Bush [signed]

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, George Bush Handwriting File.]

Document No. 108: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the
President: "Your Meeting with Gorbachev in Helsinki"

Circa early September, 1990

The national security adviser provides Bush with a concise and accurate analysis of what Gorbachev has to face this coming autumn—a "daunting and unprecedented number of challenges to his power and authority." The main problems relate to ethnic issues and economic reform. In this weakened condition, Gorbachev is more likely to accommodate Washington on a whole range of topics, like German unification. Scowcroft notes that "Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have redefined some of the basic principles underlying Soviet foreign policy." The crisis in the Persian Gulf presents a special challenge. The memo correctly notes that the Soviet leadership now faces "an intense policy debate in Moscow, especially within Shevardnadze's Foreign Ministry, where Middle East specialists are reportedly furious with the USSR's tough stance against Iraq." And yet, Gorbachev is expected to keep the alliance with the United States intact. Scowcroft also suggests that Bush engage the Soviet leader on the entire spectrum of bilateral relations—finalizing START by December, CFE in time to hold the Paris summit in November, and removing the final limitations against Germany joining NATO. On the economic front, however, the memo suggests that the president "put off for the time being, as you did at the Washington Summit, another request for outright financial assistance" and instead discuss a forthcoming economic mission to Moscow by Baker and Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher.

Gorbachev comes to Helsinki at a critical juncture in his five-year tenure as leader of the USSR, facing a daunting and unprecedented number of challenges to his power and authority this autumn. The forces he unleashed at the beginning of his rule through his policies of perestroika and glasnost have come to a head and have produced a time of uncertainty and instability in the Soviet Union that will require all his energies and political skills in the months ahead.

At first glance, Gorbachev's establishment of the Executive Presidency in March, his triumph over conservative forces at the July party congress, and his successful meetings with you and Kohl earlier in the summer, appear to have given him wide breadth of maneuverability in Soviet politics. But his freedom to chart his own course is partly illusory. His actual power to make fundamental reform decisions appears to be slipping as aggressive Republic leaders like Boris Yeltsin, and radical reformist mayors such as Gavril Popov of Moscow and Anatoly Sobchak of Leningrad have embarked on entirely new and independent paths to change without consulting the Kremlin.

Gorbachev must face several critical problems simultaneously this autumn. The most serious is structuring a coherent and workable economic reform

program which can successfully lead the country through the transition from a command economy to one based on free market principles. He must also quiet ethnic tensions and manage critically important Union negotiations which could redefine the relationship between the center and republics.

He confronts these dilemmas at a time when his own authority, popularity and power are in precipitous decline. No longer able to impose solutions on the country as he and his predecessors once did, he must now compromise and form coalitions with new leaders and institutions in Moscow and beyond. And since the Communist party has been irreparably weakened, Gorbachev must try to invigorate his new power base, the Presidency and the Presidential Council, to steer through these crises.

Gorbachev returned from his summer vacation in the Crimea seemingly intent on regaining the initiative he had lost on economic reform and the union question since you met in June. On economics, he sought a compromise with his rivals by making a quick, tactical alliance with Yeltsin on the latter's 500-day economic reform plan, in opposition to Prime Minister Ryzhkov's more conservative program. But he has waffled in recent days, angering Yeltsin and confusing everyone else. He will have to announce a new economic reform plan soon—probably a day or two after you meet—which will signal whether he is indeed committed to deep and speedy reforms advocated by Yeltsin and many of his personal advisors, or the more gradualist approach of Ryzhkov which the Supreme Soviet rejected last spring. If he cannot reverse the now pervasive sense the [sic] he is indecisive, he risks irrelevancy as bolder leaders emerge.

As these domestic issues preoccupy him, Gorbachev is likely to continue to seek accommodation with us on foreign policy issues, as he has in the Gulf crisis and on German unification. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have redefined some of the basic principles underlying Soviet foreign policy. Rejecting the old thinking that embraced revolutionary client states, thereby alienating the West, they seem to have opted to tend first their most important relationships abroad—with the U.S., Japan, China and Germany, to promote stability. This sharp break with the past may or may not persist, but it has been brought into sharp focus by the Gulf crisis. There is now an intense policy debate in Moscow, especially within Shevardnadze's Foreign Ministry, where Middle East specialists are reportedly furious with the USSR's tough stance against Iraq.

Since the coming months are critical to his efforts to stem chaos we should use this period to wrap up ongoing negotiations on arms control and regional issues and invigorate our economic relationship. You may see Gorbachev more than once this autumn, and so your meeting in Helsinki will be important in shaping the prospects for progress across a broad range of issues.

Your first priority at Helsinki should be to give Gorbachev a detailed view of events in the Gulf, and to encourage the continued, close cooperation between us so that international pressure is kept on Saddam Hussein. You might also suggest we come to an agreement on other, contentious regional issues, such as Afghanistan by proposing a mutual cutoff of arms to the warring parties and elections.

It will also be important to review European security issues at Helsinki. On German Unification, you might stress that all Four Power rights should be suspended so that Germany will be fully sovereign from the date of unification (expected October 3).

Following up on your September 6 telephone conversation with Kohl, you could also express your concern that there should be no further limitations placed on Germany's full participation in NATO.

You should also seek his agreement to say publicly that both sides commit themselves to sign a START treaty in December, and to push for more rapid progress at CFE so that we can move forward to a CSCE Summit in Paris in November. You could review with him our goals, and NATO's for the future of CSCE.

Finally, Helsinki gives you the chance to open a new chapter in our increasingly important economic relationship with the Soviets. While you will want to put off for the time being, as you did at the Washington Summit, another request for outright financial assistance, there is much you can suggest to put our economic relations on a new and higher plane.

You could propose focusing our technical assistance efforts on some of these problems, by offering our public and private sector help in food processing, energy, housing and other areas that he deems useful. You could also point to the Mosbacher-Baker Presidential Mission, which begins the day following the Helsinki meeting, as a demonstration of your interest in expanding trade and investment.

We have told the Soviets many times that we want to help them accelerate the integration of their economy into the world market system and normalize our bilateral relationship. But access to our private capital markets and to government-backed credit depends on Soviet good faith at the negotiating table. And attracting western investment depends ultimately on Soviet willingness to allow repatriation of profits and national treatment.

The message on economics he may really need to hear yet again at Helsinki is that our ability to assist him in any meaningful way depends very much on the scope and pace of his own reforms in the months ahead.

[Source: U.S. State Department, obtained through FOIA in 1999 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 109: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Private Meeting, Helsinki

September 9, 1990

Gorbachev comes to Helsinki with a comprehensive plan for dealing with Saddam Hussein prepared by Soviet experts. It provides for a declaration of withdrawal by Iraq, restoration of the Kuwaiti government, introduction of an inter-Arab peace-keeping force and the subsequent withdrawal of all outside forces from the region. A key element is to convene an international conference on the Middle East that would address the Israel-Palestine issue as part of a general settlement in the region. Bush's main purpose at the summit is to confirm Gorbachev's full and consistent support for current and future U.N. sanctions including the potential use of force against Saddam Hussein. He reminds the Soviet leader that in August they "demonstrated to the whole world that ... they are together, side by side" and declares that he now sees "a real possibility for a new world order."

Bush makes several commitments to Gorbachev, which Gorbachev repeats back to him as a matter of clarification: about a temporary nature of U.S. military presence in the region and about his preference for a non-military solution. Throughout the conversation, Gorbachev warns Bush about the possibly catastrophic consequences of using military force in the region. Bush comments several times that the U.S. does not intend to keep its troops in the region on a permanent basis and would prefer not to use force. Bush makes a personal plea, using words Gorbachev longs to hear: "Mr. President, I appeal to you as a respected friend, an equal, an important partner and participant in the events whose role is quite significant." Bush adds a further sweetener, repeatedly alluding to future expanded cooperation with the Soviet Union in the Middle East, essentially agreeing to Gorbachev's idea of international conference, but without linkage to Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait. But Gorbachev goes one step further, suggesting that the new world order could be based on "an axis that would give stability to ongoing processes"—an axis such as Soviet-American cooperation.

Bush: It is good to see you, Mr. President.

Gorbachev: I am happy to welcome you. I am very glad that we are meeting, although I must say that it was difficult for me to find time. There is a great deal of work at home.

Bush: It is good that while we were in Camp David we agreed to meet should the need arise, as we are doing right now. The fact that we agreed to hold this meeting was well received around the world.

Gorbachev: I already had an opportunity to tell the press that even though President Bush and I maintain various forms of contact at all times, during moments like these we need personal meetings for more in-depth discussion of the problems at hand.

Bush: I agree. As can be expected, among the issues we will discuss today, the situation in the Persian Gulf is of the utmost importance. In what order would you like to proceed? I would, of course, like to acquaint you with our thoughts. At the same time I would very much like to hear what you have to say. But from the start I want to emphasize that it was good that the Soviet Union and the United States demonstrated to the whole world that right now, during the crisis in the Persian Gulf, they are together, side by side.

So, perhaps you would like to start? Or I could first acquaint you with our view of the situation in the Gulf.

Gorbachev: I would agree to listen to you first, Mr. President. (Jokingly added) See how easy it is to reach an agreement with me!

Bush: All right, then, let's go straight to the point. So far, we have had good cooperation on this issue. We understand that at first it was difficult for the Soviet Union and for you personally to assume such a position, because of your long-lasting relations with Iraq. If we look at the situation more broadly, I see a real possibility for a new world order—out of this crisis and tragedy could emerge new opportunities.

However, a very definite principle has to lie at the heart of this new world order. We cannot allow Saddam Hussein to profit from his aggression. I am not sure he realizes that we, the United States, are fully determined to achieve this. I know from a number of sources that he doubts my determination. I hope that you will try to convince him otherwise. We will not accept failure in our efforts to achieve the goals set by the United Nations. We have developed a strategy aimed at this, and I believe that this strategy has a good chance of success.

We prefer sanctions as the means to achieve the goal of Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait's leadership. I would not like to see an escalation of conflict. I do not want to use military force. I know that you agree with this approach. However, Saddam Hussein must understand that if he does not withdraw from Kuwait, we are prepared to use force. Maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. In the meantime, Saddam Hussein has started a de facto dismantling of Kuwait.

As for the response to this in America, the American people and the U.S. Congress support me. People are especially outraged at Saddam Hussein's actions against innocent civilians, who may include Soviet citizens. If you meet with him, I ask you to let him know the following: his use of innocent people as a "shield" will not make me yield an inch of our policies. I believe that such actions could serve as grounds for a Nuremberg-type trial.

I would like our discussion of the Persian Gulf crisis to be in-depth and thorough. I hope that as the result of these talks you could tell Saddam Hussein that should the countries with troops in the region (and there are already 23 such countries) ultimately be compelled to use force to eliminate the consequences of Iraqi aggression, you would support these efforts. Perhaps it will be difficult for you to take such a stance, but I would welcome it if you deemed it possible.

I cannot fail to mention to you the serious concern I have for the American citizens at our embassy in Kuwait.

Two more points. During the flight here, journalists on the airplane asked me: will you ask Gorbachev to send troops to the region? I said that we have no plans to make such a request. However, let me assure you that should you make this decision, the United States would welcome it.

The second point seems especially important to you. We do not aim to keep American troops in the Gulf on a permanent basis. This is not one of the intentions behind the American presence in the Gulf. If Saddam Hussein remains in power, then any mechanisms developed to safeguard against the recurrence of aggression and the possible use of nuclear weapons would not be American, but international. I repeat—we do not have plans to directly or indirectly keep American troops in the Gulf region. Frankly, the American people would not support such plans.

I would also like to touch upon one difficult and sensitive matter. It has to do with how Americans view the situation. I am talking about the Soviet military advisers in Iraq. We know that their numbers are not great. Still, if they were to be withdrawn from Iraq in light of the sanctions, it would make a very good impression on the world public opinion and especially on public opinion in the U.S.

And now, to put all my cards on the table, I would like to say the following. For a long time, during the “Cold War” years, U.S. policy was that the Soviet Union should not play any role in the Middle East. Naturally, the Soviet Union did not agree with this line and was displeased with the U.S. position. And although I am convinced that it would be a great victory for Saddam if he could involve the issue of Arab-Israeli relations in the crisis caused by his aggression, I want to assure you that the former U.S. position on the Soviet Union’s involvement in Middle East affairs has changed. The new order, which I hope can be created after this instability, presupposes that the United States and Soviet Union will apply more positive collaborative efforts to regulate not only this problem, but the rest of the issues in the Middle East.

Finally, the last point. The closer we can bring our positions today, the more favorable the prospects for a new world order will be, for the development of Soviet-American relations, and, of course, first and foremost for a quick settlement of the current crisis and liquidation of Saddam Hussein’s aggression. Mr. President, I appeal to you as a respected friend, an equal, an important partner and participant in the events whose role is quite significant. Let us look to the future, with an understanding that we are talking about more than the current problem, we are talking about very great things. Whatever small discrepancies exist in our approach—and I must say that thanks to the Soviet side’s efforts at the United Nations these differences have narrowed considerably—it is very important for us to speak together, from a unified position, at the forthcoming press conference. On Tuesday I will make a televised address to the American people. I would like the tone of my statements to be positive and optimistic. I would like to say that we have turned over the “Cold War” page; we are done with it once and for all, as is depicted in the cartoon that you gave me.

Gorbachev: I think it is a very good cartoon. It was drawn by our veteran cartoonist Abramov.

Bush: It will be kept at Camp David along with the map you once gave me, the watch and other souvenirs.

Gorbachev: Mr. President, I appreciate the confidence and magnitude of the thoughts you just shared with me. Yes, we are going through a difficult crisis. It is a severe test of the positive achievements we made in recent years in the sphere of international relations. It is a test of the changed nature of relations between the USSR and the U.S., of their strength and stability. Of course, I do not forget what a crisis in the Persian Gulf means in its own right, its scope and the dangers associated with it. But I think there is something greater here. If we do not find a way to deal with this conflict, a great deal will be lost.

The question is—can we act on the new stage of world politics, which we entered after the end of the “Cold War;” and most importantly, how will we act? This is a very serious question that warrants much thought. In fact, we are facing a global choice. You are talking about a new order. Indeed, we have to live in a new way and build relations in a new way. The price is very high. As I said, if it were not for Malta and the new level of relations between us, the processes that unfolded in Eastern Europe and in connection with the unification of Germany would have created a situation far tougher than the Persian Gulf crisis.

Bush: Absolutely.

Gorbachev: Given the level of military confrontation in Europe, we might have gotten into a mess that we would not be able to get out of. And now we are faced with a no less difficult test.

You will probably agree that the events in Eastern Europe were more difficult for us than for the U.S. I will tell you frankly that it has taken a tremendous effort and a great force of political will to literally step over ourselves and overcome old practices that seemed immutable and to act as was required by the changed reality. To this day I have to explain our position at various forums in our country, proving the need for new thinking and new approaches to what is happening in the world, convincing people of the correctness of our political steps domestically and abroad. It is not always easy, especially when the situation is complicated by people in the West who supply analysis based on old thinking. Still, the vast majority of our society understands the Soviet leadership’s position.

In the current situation in the Persian Gulf, the United States finds itself in the more difficult position. I understand it very well, maybe even better than some people in the U.S. I think by now I know your country pretty well, especially your public opinion. People expect quick victories from the president. Incidentally, the same is true for us. People want strong, decisive action. Even in such a monumental undertaking as our *perestroika*, which requires time and tremendous effort, many expect quick results. So I understand your position.

In these difficult circumstances, the most important thing is to maintain the new system of relations we developed, the cooperation between our countries. We see the difficulty of your position as president, and frankly speaking, we feel

a sense of complicity with what you are doing, and we sympathize. It is very important that we abandoned the former approach, which presupposed that what is bad for the United States is good for the Soviet Union and conversely, what's bad for the Soviet Union is good for the United States.

Bush: I agree.

Gorbachev: I mentioned this the other day to Senator Dole, your friend and, as I understand, fellow Republican. What we are doing in the Soviet Union is in our interest, but it is in your interest that we succeed as well. Because in the world that is coming together now, the United States will not be able to cope alone. There has to be an axis that would give stability to ongoing processes, and Soviet-American cooperation is such an axis. It is necessary for the Soviet Union and the United States to be strong, confident states. You should have no doubt that this is exactly our position and it has not changed.

We did not hesitate to condemn Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. We will strictly abide by the U.N. Security Council resolution. I must say, however, that at the initial stage of the conflict we had some difficulties when you first made the decision, and then notified us about it.

Bush: Which decision do you mean?

Gorbachev: I am talking about the decision to send American troops to the region. We only heard about it when these forces were already in motion. I do not mean to say that it influenced our political approach, but it somewhat complicated the situation. Perhaps this happened because our new relations are still in the forming stages.

Bush: This is an interesting observation. When we sent our troops to the region, we did so at the request of Saudi Arabia. The situation was very acute, Iraqi troops were already south of Kuwait City. However, I accept your words as constructive criticism. Evidently, I should have called you then. I want to assure you that we did not intend to act behind your back.

Gorbachev: In general, we were able to work together, shoulder to shoulder. We were able to mobilize the U.N. Security Council and virtually the entire world community. And this was a huge achievement. In light of this, the U.S. presence in the region is perceived differently.

Bush: I agree.

Gorbachev: It is clear that the international community cannot move to a new peaceful period in its history without a mechanism designed to protect the peace process from such problems, without a response mechanism for such conflicts. In this situation, you have assumed the primary mission to repel Iraqi aggression. Here I come to the central point of my argument, followed by suggestions on how to proceed.

Let us see where we are, what has been achieved. The threat hanging over Saudi Arabia has been removed. The entire world has condemned Saddam Hussein's aggression, pinning him to the pillory. The infrastructure that provides the world's supply of oil from one of the most important sources has been protected and preserved. Thus, the American president and the entire world community

have something to say. Important strategic objectives have been achieved. However, not all of them. The problem of Kuwait is unresolved. Of course, it must be addressed.

We, like you, have a wealth of information from the region and from around the world in connection with this crisis. What you just said is very important to me. In my opinion, there are three key points.

Firstly, you, like us and virtually the whole world, want the Kuwait problem to be resolved. Secondly, you made an important statement regarding the U.S. presence in the region; you said that you do not strive to preserve this presence on a permanent basis. And thirdly, you said that you prefer a non-military solution to this problem.

I understand that right now we all seem to be under pressure, especially you. People want decisive action from you. Indeed, decisiveness is required here. But if this implies the use of military force, then it is a dangerous path. Until now we have worked together on a multilateral basis. But a unilateral military action by the U.S. would lead to consequences that would be unacceptable to you and everyone else. I do not want to sound like I am saying some great truths. The following is the logic behind our argument. If Iraq does not attack Saudi Arabia or Israel via Jordan, then the United States will appear to be the initiator of military action. At the present stage, if Iraq maintains the status quo and someone deploys military action against it, what will happen?

Bush: You mean if we launch military action without provocation from Iraq?

Gorbachev: Yes. Observe how Iraq is acting right now. Marshal Akhromyev showed me this on the map of Iraqi troop locations. The main contingents are deployed in the hinterland, not near the Saudi border. Should military action be launched against these forces, it would inevitably lead to major losses and human casualties. The memories of Afghanistan and Vietnam are still fresh in our countries. It is deep in the people's consciousness. Very soon people will start saying that the president did not choose the best course of action, that he became involved in military actions that claim thousands, or tens of thousands, of victims. No, we must find other ways.

I talked about losses, the human casualties. But we must not forget about the economic consequences, either. If the region is incapacitated, the economic consequences will be huge. Saudi Arabia already complains that it is difficult to fund the presence of your troops. This is at a time when Saudi Arabia's oil revenues have increased. What would the financial losses be if the region was essentially destroyed? We are not talking about billions, but trillions of dollars. We will all be the devil knows where. And another point. Even now we see and must admit that Hussein enjoys a certain sympathy from some people in the Arab world, a significant part of the Arab masses. He is a hero to them, a champion of the Arab cause, the person who is not afraid to confront the United States. If a massive war with a great deal of destruction breaks out in this region, where the Arab people have enormous wealth, then the Arab world will turn against you. You will be accused of giving an inadequate response to the situation. We must

remember that our psychology, the psychology of Americans and Europeans, is one thing, while the psychology of the Muslim world is another. It is all dark. To them we are all barbarians and infidels. You will appear as enemies, violators of Arab holy sites. While we're at it, I would like to mention that we both understand the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism. This is a big threat, and we have to cooperate in counteracting it.

Bush: Allow me to interrupt you for a minute. I think you assume that all of Arab public opinion would be on Iraq's side. Saddam Hussein is indeed trying to present this as a conflict between the Muslims and Satan. But I think that he will not succeed. Firstly, more than half of all Arabs live in Egypt, and this country spoke decisively against Iraqi aggression. The League of Arab States also took a firm stance. Therefore, it seems to me that Saddam failed to present his aggression as a conflict between Arabs and the West, as a struggle with the unfaithful.

Gorbachev: Mr. President, the situation is not quite like that. In particular, there has been less criticism of Saddam Hussein at the latest meetings of the Arab League. The fact of the matter is that even if there is an understanding of what is happening at the state level, at the level of public opinion and Islamic opposition, Saddam Hussein is perceived differently. And if we take the Arab leaders that we can work with—Mubarak and even Assad—they may find themselves in a difficult position. This could activate powerful forces, which are right now lying at the bottom, so to speak.

I will be frank with you. You are probably aware that some Western countries are beginning to grow wary. Should events start developing in a different direction, they will evidently have to distance themselves from you.

Bush: I agree.

Gorbachev: There is one more important thing. The unity of the Security Council could be disrupted. For example, we can assume almost with certainty that China's position will change, and that is a country with veto power. I think the American public will also take it very hard.

Therefore we must seek another path.

Of course, it is clear that Saddam Hussein will not leave Kuwait easily. In a recent exchange with all our partners, everyone emphasized the need for the strictest observance of the U.N. imposed embargo. And I have to say, the situation inside Iraq is changing. Saddam Hussein is also in a difficult position. Whatever statements he might be making right now, he will eventually have to take a sober look at the situation.

We have many strong experts on the Arab world and, in particular, on Iraq. We discussed the situation with them. They carried out a detailed situational analysis and came to an explicit conclusion. The only situation that would justify the use of force against Iraq is if Iraq attacks Saudi Arabia or Jordan. In all other cases, the use of force should be ruled out.

Bush: What if he, say, hits Israel with two Scud missiles?

Gorbachev: Then that would be a different situation. However, I do not think that he will go there.

Indeed, one cannot agree with the status quo. We cannot allow the aggressor to benefit from the aggression. But all our experts believe that we should not drive Saddam Hussein into a corner. This will not give us a solution. We have to look for an option that would allow Saddam to at least partly save face. Such is reality. It is not pleasant from a moral standpoint.

What if we take a certain set of interrelated steps, a sum of measures? Namely:

- If Iraq announces that it will free the detained foreign nationals and withdraw troops from Kuwait, the United States and other members of the U.N. Security Council would make a statement that they will not attack or bomb Iraq.
- Furthermore, if these two statements are made and Iraqi troops are withdrawn and replaced by inter-Arab forces, whose composition would be subject to agreement and would be under the U.N. flag and control, then the United States would begin to reduce its military presence first in Saudi Arabia, possibly only symbolically at first. As in Kuwait, in Saudi Arabia the withdrawn troops would be replaced with inter-Arab forces under U.N. auspices.

After this, the U.N. Security Council would issue a decision to suspend its resolution on the embargo against Iraq. Upon the completion of Iraqi troop withdrawal, the relevant resolutions would be revoked.

Bush: This would be contingent on the withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait?

Gorbachev: I will say more about this.

Bush: Of course, my question is hypothetical.

Gorbachev: This plan has some other elements as well. By the way, we ran it by the Arabs. If Saddam rejects this plan, he will expose himself in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of the Arabs. It would prevent sympathy for Saddam Hussein from growing in the Arab world.

You said that Saddam Hussein wants to heap all the problems in one pile and link it to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestine, and Lebanon. This is true, and he wins this way. We have to take into consideration that the issue of Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is very sensitive. That is why we believe that we must take this card out of his hands and use it in our common interest. You have probably thought about this too.

An international conference with the participation of the U.N. Security Council members and the Arab states could discuss the problem of restoring Kuwait's independence; as well the other regional problems, including the Palestinian and Lebanese issues. Kuwait's independence should be the starting point. At this conference we could also discuss the question of creating a security system that would be guaranteed by the Soviet Union, the United States, and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

I must say that the European capitals have shown interest in this idea, and some similar proposals have been put forward. If Israel would agree to take part

in such a conference, probably not right away but in the second stage, we could agree to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as compensation.

This plan is acceptable to many Arabs. Of course, Saddam Hussein can reject the idea of withdrawing troops. But since this issue is tied to the discussion of Palestine and Arab lands, public opinion would condemn him for the continuation of Israeli occupation, for missing a chance to resolve this problem. He would show the Palestinians that he is only speculating on this issue.

We believe that in combination with the embargo, the proposal of a settlement plan would put him in a difficult position and would limit his room to maneuver.

We asked our experts for their views on the blockade of Iraq. But the blockade cannot be implemented without using force; therefore, war could break out at any moment. This would mean the end for any peaceful settlement plans. At the same time, we believe it is possible to make the economic embargo stricter. Right now, Saddam Hussein succeeds in exploiting the theory that the Soviet Union and the United States have ganged up on him, so to speak, they are starving the Iraqi people, and it is practically a genocide against Iraq and the Arab people. This argument has some impact on the Arab masses. It must be taken into account.

There is one more important point in the plan we have in mind. The current government of Kuwait, i.e., the government in exile, and Saddam Hussein's government should come to the negotiating table to discuss the future relations between the two countries and the financial issues that the two countries had discussed. Afterwards, provisions could be made for elections or a referendum, or some other option.

We believe that such an approach would allow us to take the initiative, deprive Hussein of propaganda points that he is tallying in the Arab world, and take away the halo of a hero of the Arab people. If Saddam accepts this plan, we will be able to find a package solution. But more likely, at least at first, is that Saddam Hussein will reject this plan. And yet, if this or a similar proposal will be put forward, we will appear in a different light, as true supporters of a political solution. Yes, we have shown determination and solidarity in condemning aggression, but at the same time we offer a chance. We topple Saddam Hussein from his current position, from which he extracts certain dividends. We provide the opportunity for a new process to start; we protect the U.N. resolutions and everything that has already been achieved.

These are my thoughts, Mr. President. I did not touch upon certain particulars, for example, the issue of Soviet experts in Iraq. By the way, they are not advisers but technical specialists who are serving contracts between the Soviet Union and Iraq. And their number has already decreased by 30–40 people. If there were 196 people at the beginning of the conflict, now there are about 150.

Bush: Yes, we have similar specialists in Iraq; specifically employees of the Bechtel and IBM corporations. But we are trying to get them out of Iraq because we believe that the contracts are nullified with the adoption of U.N. resolutions.

Gorbachev: We are reducing the number of our people in Iraq, too. By the way, we are losing 1.2 billion U.S. dollars by winding up relations with this

country. But we are doing it because otherwise there would be very different losses. In conclusion, I would like to say that we are using our role and our position based on principled positions. We joined forces to support pertinent U.N. resolutions; we consider it necessary that the situation be returned to the original position, although, of course, changes are possible during the settlement process. But I repeat, our fundamental position has not changed—we are for settlement, we are for a solidarity approach.

You, Mr. President, expressed many interesting ideas; we have taken note and will be sure to respond. Indeed, it is very important that our talk today results in a demonstration of cooperation between our countries and our joint commitment to remedy the situation and restore justice.

In front of me I have the text of Saddam Hussein's speech from yesterday, in which he addresses both of us. He says that Iraq has not invaded either one of our countries. Iraq has no intention of harming our interests. He goes on to talk about the history of Kuwait, that it is a product of British colonialism. He says: Iraq's prime minister Said, a friend of the West, said in his time to the British that Iraq would not agree to the creation of this state. Prime Minister Kassem, friend of the Soviet Union, said the same thing. When the Americans invaded Panama, Hussein continues, the U.N. Security Council and the Soviet Union were silent. Now, when events are taking place on Arab land, when the matter at hand is our business, everyone protests. The White House and the Kremlin must know that they are dealing with a people who can stand up for themselves. Later he talks about the unity of the Arab nation, that the Iraqi people have been elected by God and deserve the support of all Muslims. And so on.

Bush: That's bullshit.

Gorbachev: But it is calculated.

Bush: The only truth in that statement is when he says that Bush is not a Muslim and that he eats pork. The rest is lies.

And now about the plan. I think that he will accept this plan, even latch on to it. But most of the world would see this as our colossal defeat. Because this way, he would succeed in shifting the focus of the situation—he would be able to tie it to the Israeli-Palestinian problem, which is precisely what he wants. This issue remains unresolved for years, and we cannot allow Iraqi aggression to be tied up with this issue.

I allow that your experts may know more than ours, but on one point I would disagree with them. I do not think that Saddam succeeded in becoming a symbol of the Arab struggle with the infidel. Firstly, the aggression undermined his credibility, which is clear to many people in the Arab world. Secondly, he failed to win over Assad, Mubarak and in general the majority of the members of the League of Arab States. Saddam would like us to believe that he speaks on behalf of the entire Muslim world. But Arabs tell me that this is not the case.

Therefore, no matter what he says, I do not consider him to be such a giant. If the adopted plan left the question of Kuwait open in any way, it would be a major defeat for the United Nations and a blow to the new world order.

Gorbachev: But the central point, the key point of the plan is precisely that Iraq has to withdraw from Kuwait.

Bush: Yes, the plan contains some points with which I agree.

Gorbachev: And he probably will not accept the plan.

Bush: Why, he would get almost everything that he wants. He would achieve his strategic goals in Kuwait. And the American troops would leave the region without any guarantees.

Gorbachev: No, the Kuwait question would be resolved. Inter-Arab forces would be introduced and, of course, there would be international guarantees with the participation of the United States, the Soviet Union and the U.N. Security Council permanent members.

Bush: That is positive, I agree with that.

Gorbachev: The current Kuwait dynasty would be restored; after all, it is with these people that Iraq has to conduct negotiations on financial and economic matters. The rest will be the business of the people of Kuwait; they will decide their own internal questions.

Bush: You are referring to the election?

Gorbachev: Yes.

Bush: Yes, taking that into consideration, I think Saddam would reject such a plan. Of course, he would like to tie his aggression to the Arab-Israeli issue, but he put too much at stake when he occupied Kuwait. He will not want to part with the fruits of his aggression.

I want to assure you once again that we are in favor of a peaceful resolution.

Let us think about this plan and throw around some ideas, so to speak. We are taking into account many considerations that were expressed by the Arabs themselves, particularly the Maghreb countries and others.

Of one thing I am firmly convinced. It would be madness to take military action against Iraq if it does not take any new military steps itself.

Bush: This is true, but as I said before, right now Saddam is destroying Kuwait, he is dismantling this country step by step, machine by machine. Not to mention the loss of life, the enormous suffering of the Kuwaiti people.

Gorbachev: That is why we must act quickly. That is the essence of this plan. If you take military action, it could ruin all the progress. We already have the strategic victory. The functionality and security of the oil infrastructure in the Middle East is preserved. Therefore, the U.S. President can say that we are operating from a position of strength, not a position of weakness. The most important thing is not to lose momentum, but to act carefully, responsibly, and to avoid human suffering. I do not understand what Saddam Hussein wins here.

Bush: When I was listening to your presentation, I thought at first that your plan leaves open the question of restoring the current rulers of Kuwait.

Gorbachev: This is an important point. We foresee that negotiations between the current government of Kuwait and Iraq would resume on the regulation of financial claims, etc. So this is being taken into account. Right now Saddam is exploiting the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If we add this element by

proposing a conference—and by the way, this idea is well-received in Western European capitals—then he will either have to accept this plan and leave Kuwait, or reject the plan, thereby rejecting the very idea he is trying to exploit right now in the eyes of the Arabs.

Bush: But let us imagine that he will reject the plan. What will happen then?

Gorbachev: Then it will be necessary to continue the political pressure and the embargo. But he will lose the support that we have to admit he has right now. Because he will reject the things he is proposing right now. This will expose him in the eyes of the Arab people. The result will be a powerful isolation of Saddam Hussein.

Bush: And if he agrees to the plan, he will have to withdraw from Kuwait and the current Kuwaiti leaders will be restored to power, but at the same time he will achieve a conference on the Palestinian question and the withdrawal of American troops.

Gorbachev: The U.S. troops will be withdrawn gradually, when Iraqi troops are out of Kuwait. The U.S. troops will be replaced by Inter-Arab forces, and only after international guarantees will be provided.

Bush: There is another thing I am worried about. Whatever is proposed, it should not be presented as a Soviet-American plan. To many people it would seem strange if our two countries worked out the settlement of this issue. Perhaps it should be an action of the U.N. But I must say that the ideas you expressed are very interesting, and we will have to give them some serious consideration. My concern is that we are dealing with a very unstable individual, who could undertake some kind of provocation, most likely against the U.S. rather than against the USSR. For example, he could organize a terrorist act, which would guarantee that we would have to make a response. If he wants to provoke us, he will do it. All the Arab leaders are telling us the same thing: he is a cruel, unstable, ambitious man who is ready for any provocation. This worries me, because we cannot sit idly by in the face of obvious provocation, we cannot limit ourselves to words.

Gorbachev: I would like to respond to your comment. Can we make some kind of decisions here about a plan? No. But if we do nothing, then why meet at all? That is why I think that if we have some kind of idea which seems fruitful, we should think about the mechanism to start this process, which would result in some kind of plan or set of measures. Then it's not important who proposed what and when. The result is important—a multilateral effort and a settlement mechanism.

Bush: I agree. I would not want to send out a signal that we are working on this problem on our own. The important thing is to start searching for a solution and finally reach an agreement on an acceptable approach. In this regard, I agree with you.

Gorbachev: Today we could say that we had a broad discussion of the problem and that we believe it is possible to find an approach that would allow us to untangle this dangerous knot. Now we have to work together to prevent this problem from escalating into an even more dangerous crisis.

Bush: I agree with almost everything you said, except for one phrase. Instead of saying that “we believe it is possible to find a solution” we should say “we will look for a solution,” because I am still not sure that there really is one.

Gorbachev: The last point has to do with what you said about a possible provocation from Saddam Hussein. I think that we have the same assessment of this person—the political, moral, and psychological aspects. But we believe that the potential of this personality will come out if he is driven into a corner. On the other hand, if we give him an outlet in the form of a political process, which would at least partially create the impression that there are no winners or losers and we are not bringing him to his knees in front of the whole world, so to speak, then he will not resort to a provocation. This is the opinion of people who know him, who have interacted with him personally for decades.

So, I believe that the point and the outcome of this meeting should be the following—it is like two sides of the same coin. We once again demonstrate our solidarity and our determination to find a solution to this problem. At the same time we will show that we are considering approaches that would allow us to solve this problem with minimal losses and by political means. At the same time we understand with what and whom we are dealing.

Bush: I like the idea of showing the world that we are prepared to do our part, and even a little more, for a peaceful settlement. At the same time, we must act very carefully so as not to undermine the collective efforts that were taken within the U.N. framework. Some people in our country are voicing ideas for various compromises, for example, on the basis of elections in Kuwait. The elections would determine what would happen in Kuwait, who would rule Kuwait. Of course, if this leads to the restoration of the regime, that would be good. But if such elections are presented as a condition for the settlement, in my opinion that would undermine the collective position we took. It must be completely clear that aggression cannot be rewarded in any way. If it appears that any benefit came from the aggression, that this outrageous act resulted in even partial success, then two or five years down the road we will have to face a similar problem.

Gorbachev: But if Saddam gets absolutely nothing and finds himself cornered, then we can expect very severe retribution. This is a man who can strike in a way that would cause us to lose much more than if we gave him some kind of break, some kind of outlet. Therefore, we should not bring him to his knees. Nothing good will come of it.

Bush: Do you think one could reach a compromise with Hitler?

Gorbachev: I think these are disparate phenomena, there is no analogy.

Bush: Granted, Saddam Hussein is not a global phenomenon, but they are comparable in terms of personal cruelty.

Gorbachev: Mr. President, George, I appeal to you as a friend. We have to choose. Choose from the available options, though I understand that the choices are limited and unpleasant. But I think that if the president who has already reached the U.S.’s main strategic goals in this situation, acts in a way to avoid entangling America in an enormous conflict that could lead to a breakdown of the

structures that ensure the world oil supply, it would be seen as a major victory. I think everyone would agree with that. Of course, right now there are suggestions that your prestige and the like are on the line. But we have to act wisely, act in a way that would allow us to save people and preserve the oil. Of course, you could strike him. But you have to choose. We really are dealing with a paranoiac, and because of this we have to give him some kind of carrot. Ultimately, everyone will win if the consequences of aggression are overcome, and international law and justice are restored.

Bush: I agree with everything you said. We do not aspire to receive the laurels of individual or collective victory in the fight against Saddam Hussein. But in order to ensure that the new order we are both striving for is preserved in the future, we must find an answer that would give us a guarantee against future aggression. As I understand it, many of the provisions in your plan are aimed precisely at this goal. The only problem is that should we include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in this plan, it might be such a carrot that would create the impression that the aggression was a success. Such a result would cause me very great concern.

Gorbachev: But that would not be the carrot. The carrot is that we recognize him as a partner. If we do not include the Israeli-Palestinian problem in our plan, he could say, "I put forward a comprehensive plan, which, however, was ignored." But if we include the Israeli-Palestinian question and he rejects the plan, then he will discredit himself in front of all the Arabs. Everyone will see that he was bluffing and speculating on this issue, which is a very acute one for Arabs. If he agrees, then Kuwait will be restored, the situation in the Persian Gulf will be restored, and there will be guarantees, the process of regulating the Arab-Israeli conflict will begin, and already at the first stage we would restore our relations with Israel without waiting for the final settlement of the Palestinian problem. This would be a serious step for us, our "compensation."

I repeat, including the Israeli-Palestinian problem into the plan would not be the carrot for Saddam Hussein. If he rejects the plan, he will expose himself in the eyes of the Arabs and will get no support from them. At the same time, by including this question we would give support to the moderate forces among the Arabs, such as Mubarak.

Bush: But already there practically exists a conference that deals with the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. I am talking about the multilateral efforts at the U.N. Security Council.

Gorbachev: This entire plan would also be under the auspices of the U.N. It would be carried out in the U.N. format, and with the participation of U.N. Security Council members and Arab states. If Saddam rejects this plan, then we will win time, and he will be isolated and will look like a maniac with whom the world should have nothing to do. And yet, he is not a maniac. A member of the Presidential Council, Academician Primakov, has known Saddam for a long time, and states that Saddam Hussein is not a schizophrenic. He is a person to be reckoned with. Of course, before you speak with the others, it may be good to sound him out. Maybe send somebody to him without telling him the essence of the plan.

Bush: I think that in any case we should try to probe him. We do not have access to him. Considering your history of relations with Iraq, if you could somehow feel him out, it would be extremely constructive. But if you speak with Mubarak, he will tell you: Saddam can no longer leave Kuwait; too much is at stake, he has already suffered too many losses.

Gorbachev: Assad says the same thing.

Bush: If he leaves Kuwait, he is done for.

Gorbachev: It is important to build the whole process around this.

Bush: If you and I have any difference in interpretation, it is the following. I do not think that we need any additional proof of the fact that this is an unreasonable person. Your argument is at least partially based on the idea that he has yet to reveal his true intentions.

Gorbachev: We must call his bluff. Should he accept this plan, it would start a process that ultimately would benefit everybody.

Bush: I want to clarify—your idea is based on the Iraqi, American, and other troops withdrawing first, and only then convening an international conference?

Gorbachev: An agreement must be reached on the conference and its format. The process will begin based on this agreement. This would be tied to Iraq's announcement that it will free detained citizens and withdraw from Kuwait; as well as the U.S.'s and U.N. Security Council's announcement that they will not attack Iraq. During the first stage, Iraq would withdraw troops from Kuwait and the inter-Arab forces would introduce their troops. The United States would withdraw some symbolic number of troops, which would also be replaced by inter-Arab forces. As for a military presence in general, it should be carefully weighed. When structures and safeguards are established to ensure security in the region, the U.S. military will be able to leave.

Bush: The ruling Kuwait regime would be restored?

Gorbachev: Yes.

Bush: Well, let us think about it and discuss it. I would like to ask my adviser Brent Scowcroft whether he has any questions or ideas related to this.

Scowcroft: No, not yet. One main question remains. If he rejects this plan, can we indefinitely put up with a stalemate, with the current status quo?

Gorbachev: If he rejects the plan, we will continue to pressure him and increase Iraq's isolation. Internal processes could start in that country as people begin to see that there is no way out with this man. Then the Iraqi people will hold him responsible for their burdens, not us.

Bush: By the way, even now there is a growing concern that the measures we are taking against Iraq should not result in starving children in that country. This question has been raised.

Gorbachev: We think that under the embargo, bread and medicine should be sent to Iraq. The question is, under whose auspices it should be done. You touch upon a very important point.

Bush: Naturally, we do not want children to die of hunger. But if we see that humanitarian concerns necessitate an exception to be made in the sanctions, then

it would be necessary to make the deliveries through the Red Crescent or analogous channels, so Saddam could not feed his troops with this bread.

Gorbachev: Absolutely.

Bush: Now I would like to address a completely different question.

Chancellor Kohl invited me to Germany in order to participate in the October 3rd ceremony on the unification of Germany together with you. I told Kohl, quite honestly, that it would be difficult for me to fulfill his request. It will be just a month before the congressional elections, and I've already had to cancel a trip to South America, which both I and the South Americans considered to be quite important. How important do you think this event is? I know that it is very important for Kohl. But it is unlikely that I will go. If I do not participate, will it create any problems for you?

Gorbachev: No. I am also very busy with domestic issues right now. We will have a big fight over the transition to a market economy. Moreover, I will have to lead the development of the Union Treaty. As you can see, the future of our country is being decided, so it would be very difficult for me to get away. When Kohl invited me, I told him that I consider this event very important; it marks the end of an historical era. But as to the level of participation, I said that I would consult with you and others.

Bush: If you do not ask me to change my decision, I will call Kohl and tell him, without mentioning our conversation, that unfortunately I cannot come.

Gorbachev: I will not go.

Bush: I take this as a personal gesture.

Gorbachev: In this matter we do not need to have any disagreements.

Bush: You will not participate in the Summit for Children?

Gorbachev: I cannot go.

Bush: I will go because it is taking place in New York.

Gorbachev: I think we should not lose sight of the question of your visit to the USSR. I assume that we will continue to work on strategic and conventional arms agreements. In both cases it is possible to reach an agreement. We could tell the press that we discussed these questions, and while certain issues remain, we expect to achieve a positive result. We will not go into the details.

Bush: I agree. I would really like for the work to go faster. I intend to tell Jim Baker to spur our bureaucracy, because our position remains unchanged: we sincerely wish to reach an early agreement on the negotiations.

Gorbachev: I agree with you, except I prefer to say "experts" instead of "bureaucrats." We have exhausted our time, but we will continue the conversation after lunch in an expanded format.

[Source: *Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Anna Melyakova. Published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, v. 22, pp. 45–56*]

Document No. 110: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Plenary Meeting, Helsinki, 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

September 9, 1990

In the second part of their conversation, after lunch, Bush assures Gorbachev that “[he has] taken on board seriously your views that a peaceful solution [in the Gulf] is needed.” Unexpectedly, Gorbachev accepts the U.S. version of the joint statement virtually without changes and does not talk about the need for a concrete plan of action as he did in the morning. The final statement refers only to “broader peace efforts in the Middle East.” It does not mention an international peace conference, which Gorbachev’s plan has envisioned. Gorbachev now moves to his top priority—economic reform. He describes his vision of a gradual transition to price liberalization and a free market, hoping that after showing so much cooperation on Iraq he will be treated as a partner in the economic realm, too. Bush emphasizes again that the U.S. does not have the resources for economic aid but declares that “out of this new order we can find a way.” They do discuss some technical cooperation, especially in the energy sector, and the U.S. side shows interest in joint exploration of Soviet oil and gas resources, but they are not willing even to forgive the Kerensky debt—Russian pre-revolutionary obligations. A brief discussion on regional issues covers national reconciliation in Cambodia and Afghanistan, where the Soviet Union is advocating for a national election on the Nicaraguan model, with U.N. observers.

President Bush: I thought we had a very good discussion this morning. I have taken on board seriously your views that a peaceful solution is needed. I understand there is a statement, which we need to discuss, that would be seen as an enormous success. I think we would then have exhausted the Persian Gulf discussion. If this is agreeable, let’s move on.

I’m not equipped to negotiate arms control now. As I said, we are very much committed and awaiting resolution. I’ll go back and encourage our negotiators to get going.

President Gorbachev: Now you are speaking of negotiators respectfully.

President Bush: They should get it done; they’re hung up on technicalities. I am open to hearing about the future of Europe. There is the IMF. We could talk about economic issues. We don’t have an agenda.

President Gorbachev: I want to greet my colleagues with whom we have worked with success. I want to support what the President has said—our colleagues and yours can take full note. The President and I think it is very important to make sure at this phase of mutual development that we act together, supported broadly by the UN. I recall in 1967, the evolution of crisis and comparing it to now. We are channeling our energies differently. We have barred

the possibility of any further action on his [Saddam]⁵² part. We have adopted an embargo and protected oil resources. Based on those criteria, a lot has been accomplished. We can contemplate the next phase to make sure U.N. Resolution 660 is accomplished. We will have acted not from a position of weakness but of strength. There are some hot heads who have been hinting that we are acting from weakness. We have been able to discuss developments fruitfully and agreed to work together. I've said that as regards arms talks, it is possible to complete the talks and negotiations on CFE and START. The Foreign Ministers will have to work in a very substantive way.

I have done some work on the Statement on page 1. There are some amendments that we would like to suggest:

In para 1: "Iraq's illegal invasion": I want to omit *illegal* because yesterday he wanted to prove it was legal. The word invasion makes it entirely clear.

President Bush: "Illegal" strengthens it.

President Gorbachev: I think he is trying to exploit the point—invasion is invasion.

Even now in the resolutions being adopted in the U.N. the humanitarian aspect is being provided for. We should also take out "should be monitored." Saddam has said there is no pressing humanitarian need. We have agreed that it must be monitored, but we cannot describe everything. You have mentioned children; maybe we should reflect this. We could mention children, and that we want to resolve the crisis—"consistent with the U.N. Charter"—as soon as the objectives have been achieved. It is essential at this stage to work actively to resolve all conflicts.

President Bush: That links the Palestinian question with Saddam's illegal act. I want to ask the Secretary of State to respond.

Secretary Baker: Deletion of the word "illegal" is no big matter. If you want to, no problem.

Minister Shevardnadze: Maybe "aggression" is better.

Secretary Baker: The only fundamental difference is the issue of food. Let me skip and go to "our preference to resolve." There's no problem with a small change—"determined to see it end"—no problem. "Once the objectives mandated by U.N. 660–665 resolutions" have been achieved.

President Bush: OK.

General Scowcroft: "The resolutions listed above."

President Gorbachev: OK.

Secretary Baker: You suggest it is essential. The change would be to "is." I want to say that it is essential to work actively, to avoid future, present or past tense.

President Gorbachev: OK.

The paragraph on food is inconsistent with the U.N. Security Council's discussions. We need to add something about the children. "Control" is meant to

⁵² Bracketed clarification in the original. [Editors]

make sure only those who are truly deserving. I would speak specifically of children. This doesn't change the essence.

President Bush: Let me comment on a problem here. What we are doing is accepting the argument that the humanitarian clause needs to be enacted. We must be careful that we don't accept Saddam's view. If we now say that the Indians, etc., would send food and say that the humanitarian clause has been triggered. I accept that the U.N. has spoken, but my reservation is that I don't know that there are shortages. We are told that they have a good stock.

Secretary Baker: Why not reference the U.N. resolution, and (1) provide for embargo exceptions in humanitarian conditions; (2) note the sanctions committee is in process of determining the meaning; and (3) that the US and USSR agree that monitoring is necessary, with priority to children.

President Gorbachev: The idea of referring to the resolution is correct. It will show our humanism, but then you are saying US and USSR imports must be monitored to ensure that food reaches strictly those to whom it is destined.

President Bush: We also need to have the right to put medicine in the same category.

Secretary Baker: Let's have drafters work on it. We agree that commercial sales of food is not what is meant by humanitarian exception.

President Gorbachev: Yes, indeed.

President Bush: This statement will have a strong positive impact.

President Gorbachev: Even reiterating our position will so do.

President Bush: I understand President Reagan is coming soon.

President Gorbachev: We have prepared for him. I will receive him.

President Bush: He is a little older. I have great affection for him.

I am interested in how we can be a positive influence on your reforms. I would like to think that out of being together on the Iraq crisis that we can work together better. I wondered if that should be left for later when we helped formulate change in NATO. I wanted a signal to be seen, that east-west confrontation had given way to cooperation. The NATO meeting in London was enthusiastically approached. I hope it was read as a real change. What shall we talk about? Economic problems?

President Gorbachev: OK. You are right that we, in the context of our reform, have reached the decisive phase. This explains all the debate and turmoil. We have been able to keep the turmoil within debate, which has sometimes been sharp. In some places there has been conflict. Still, overall, any global confrontation or civil conflict has been averted. In a country with our complicated history, structures are not simple. We are overloaded with problems. That we have avoided conflict is good. Now all is to be decided. It is understood that we must move toward a market. It will mean substantial changes. There is an understanding that to move, it is necessary to have a different situation. How do we get there? We must change property relations. There is a very difficult process of phasing out state property—lease holds, cooperatives—and selling off small and medium enterprises. It means privatization in many forms and new motivation

for individuals: peasants to own farms or family shops. In setting up shareholders, we create new participants in the market. We need to reform banks, create antimonopoly laws. Everything is ready; stock exchanges are being set up right now. We are approaching a complex society with a dislocated consumer market. It could result in a price explosion. There is now a sharp debate about whether we should raise prices in a centralized way. The government wants a centralized rise in prices. Shatalin wants price stabilization first, and then let the market set the prices. This means absorbing ruble overhang and adjusting incomes. This discussion is in the final stages. A decision will be given and the program of transition announced as of Oct. 1.

President Bush: When you submit the plan to the Republics, do they have to act on it and pass laws?

President Gorbachev: We must not just consult them, we need their consent.

President Bush: How long a time frame do you envision?

President Gorbachev: For stabilization, we need 3–5 months to stabilize the market to begin to release some prices in 1991–1992. The transition period will come only then, and it will be long and hard. People worry about price inflation and unemployment. The whole of society must learn how to act; this may seem strange to you. We will need tremendous effort. Unpopular measures will be enacted, but we must hold the society together. But we cannot wait. If we do not act radically, it will be dangerous. Money will cease to work and barter will take over. There will be economic chaos with each collective working self-protectively. We must muster the will, and this is not a simple thing. The Russian Communist Party Congress shows there will be problems. We need also to have some sort of room for maneuver, to saturate the market with products, to make people feel that the change in prices will bring something to the consumer. A reduction in the money supply, an increase in production of consumer goods—I hope Western countries can help with the specifics. We are speaking of a need for help. The numbers are not great, and we are not asking for grants, just loans that we will pay back with interest. The coming 3–5 months will be critical. Your position will be of great importance. I hope that when Baker comes to USSR he can discuss specifics, not just in terms of bilateral relations, but things that will have an effect on others.

President Bush: There are certain areas where we can move forward. I touched briefly on energy cooperation; that could be done in the short range. We could free up some technologies that have been held up, like horizontal drilling. There we can move forward. I hope Shevardnadze can talk about what you need in the short-run.

As you know, we don't have the cash for large economic assistance. I don't want to be under false colors, but the climate for cooperation is continuing. There is still some old thinking, but I think we are on common ground now. This statement will help, and I will refer to it. Maybe it will swing some heads. We are negotiating at Andrews Air Force Base, trying to figure out how to cut the budget. We have some constraints, but out of this new order we can find a way.

Secretary Baker: It's important to clear away the legal underbrush. For example, if you can get your negotiators to engage meaningfully on the Kerensky Debt claims, we might be able to repeal Stevenson and Byrd. In terms of getting a Trade Agreement, we are watching your discussion on passage of emigration legislation. You need to get it approved; it will help give us some freedom to maneuver.

President Gorbachev: We are about to pass new legislation on foreign investment. We intend to take the first steps to convert the ruble.

Secretary Baker: We are also negotiating a Bilateral Investment Treaty. One of my assistant secretaries of State told me we are in a position to complete a draft for a later meeting. We would be in a better position to cooperate on loans and grants.

Governor Sununu: There is big difficulty in encouraging private investment. They don't know who to negotiate with—the Republics or the center. The uncertainty is the biggest problem. If you can make it clear, we'd be able to move more quickly.

President Gorbachev: I believe we are on our way to—we are reexamining—major Union programs. We will send Union money to fund programs with the Republics. They can also cooperate between regions. All enterprises are able to have independent access to the market. We see vast opportunities; some partners have already found each other, particularly in conversion of defense complexes. I understand the process is well underway. The Soviet Union will not disappear, but we need production, etc.

President Bush: Have you thought about gold backing of some instruments? You could raise a specific amount of money.

President Gorbachev: There will be some new opportunities. We want the normal ruble to be gold backed too, and we will devalue it. This question was analyzed, and we must move toward convertability [sic]. Otherwise it will interfere with market reforms. Sound finances, a reliable ruble, and diversity of ownership will help.

Secretary Baker: As you know, we are briefing businessmen. There is a great potential to further develop energy reserves. The US can make the technology.

President Gorbachev: We can have very good cooperation in this area.

Secretary Baker: Let's take it out of the U.S. realm, for example, if a French company wanted to risk its money, would the USSR grant concessions?

President Gorbachev: I think there are some well considered proposals for the Tenpiz Oil fields involving an entire consortium with Chevron. All in all we must develop the oil, gas, and energy industry. We sustain great losses now. We listen to good proposals.

Another subject which should be positively evaluated concerns laying a Euro-Asia communication channel based on fiber optics. The Japanese are interested in it. But we want to hear from you—the US must look into everything agreed on.

There are problems involving the US Administration and the Soviet Aviation Minister.

General Scowcroft: I believe this concerns the development of a civil aircraft. Yes, the Soviet Union would provide the body, the US the engine, and the Israelis the avionics.

President Bush: Another important area is energy. Cooperative development of hydrocarbons with other countries would be beneficial [sic]. I understand ARCO is coming to your country. Companies are aware of the need to safeguard against appearance of “owning” the resources of the USSR. They are prepared to be flexible.

President Gorbachev: Maslykov is in charge of this; he will work out all proposals. Perhaps you could talk with them.

Secretary Baker: Companies are worried that the Republics will come back and say there is no deal.

President Gorbachev: We understand.

Shevardnadze: In Irkutsk we described long term projects.

General Akhromeyev: The President of Texaco will make a report. He is working both with the central organization and the Russian Federation.

Mr. Primakov: He raised the problem correctly. This document has to be dealt with in great detail. There is speculation at this time about why don't you get access to just some Republics, not to all Union Republics. The main recipient will be the central government. It is a much different matter to do it between enterprises. We are open to creation of markets, and the Union republics want to participate. But only those who produce goods should participate. But we should not forget the importance of the central government.

President Gorbachev: We ask whether anyone asks what state General Motors belongs to. We are in the phase of passing declarations which people might have thought then alarming. Now we are tackling the economy, which demands the establishment of a unitarian state. Russia was particularly decisive, although they continue to thrust out statements. People are getting sober. This is now the foundation of an economy—communications, information, finances, single currency, a single custom system—there is no getting away from it.

President Bush: I believe it would be helpful, strictly on trade, to have some state officials talk about how trade and taxation works. Would it be helpful for you?

President Gorbachev: I think after a while it would be helpful.

Primakov: Republic governors can receive them on a level of friendly bilateral exchange.

President Bush: There are many people who understand what you're trying to do. Maybe this is for the near future.

On regional subjects, I think we're close on Afghanistan and Cambodia. I feel like a mouse in a trap. I don't want the cheese just out of the trap. I want to ask Jim to say what we're thinking; I know Eduard and Jim have talked about it—let's get them resolved.

Secretary Baker: Recent developments hold more promise on Afghanistan, and we are closer to an agreement. On July 18, we said we would have

a dialogue with Vietnam. The Perm 5 has a framework agreement, and we are fairly satisfied with it. We said we would begin with Phnom Penh, and you with Sihanouk. He has indicated he will attend. I am very hopeful that maybe we can find resolution. We would appreciate anything you can do to press on this matter.

On Afghanistan, the question is one of the degree to which Najibullah would cede authority. We're getting closer. We need to revive the detailed proposals, but we're very close. One solution could be a temporary transfer authority, and then we could consider negative symmetry within that context. But we don't want a hostile government.

President Bush: I know we can get them done.

Shevardnadze: It is right that we should continue and work out the fundamentals like free elections, uninvolvement, presence of some organization in Cambodia, such as U.N. representatives there, etc. Five documents were agreed among the Perm 5 on the internal aspect. The Chinese are serious and changing, but internal contradictions remain. We and you could have been more active if it had not been for Iraq. But we are on a good track and making natural headway. There are some new elements, such as consenting to hold free elections under the sponsorship and rigorous control of the UN. We should set up a committee for holding elections and overseeing government and Presidential functions—these should be turned over to that committee, including the army, militia, etc. I think in Moscow we can analyze it all.

Also, the President received Najibullah—the Afghans are showing greater flexibility.

President Bush: Is the U.N. election idea new?

Shevardnadze: It would be just the way it was in Nicaragua.

President Bush: And there would be observers?

President Gorbachev: We think we should set up committee for that purpose.

President Bush: Creating a U.N. presence in Cambodia could be expensive, perhaps \$5 billion.

General Scowcroft: May [sic] we should discuss what we will say at the press conference.

Shevardnadze: A question is sure to be asked about the President's visit this year.

President Gorbachev: Our position is that an agreement remains in effect to meet; we just need to speed up work.

President Bush: We didn't put any conditions on our next visit. I will say I'm looking forward to it, hope to have a START agreement in place, we're hoping to do it this year, and that we discussed it.

President Gorbachev: Your formula is acceptable.

President Bush: I'll mention that there is no specific date, but that we want to do it, maybe at the end of this year or early next year.

What questions, Marlin, should we be ready on?

Marlin Fitzwater: The situation in the Gulf and whether you made any new plans.

President Bush: I would say we want a peaceful resolution, and that our statement speaks to our fundamental resolve.

Marlin Fitzwater: A question may also arise on Soviet participation, troops in particular.

President Bush: If economic assistance comes up, we can say that some businessmen are on the way.

Secretary Baker: The use of force question may also come up.

President Bush: The statement is very good; it deals with all of this. Who will read it? If you get Russian copies, we can do it in English.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 111: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Kohl, 12:36 p.m. – 12:46 p.m.

September 11, 1990

Bush calls Kohl in high spirits to inform him on the results of the summit. He tells the German leader that Gorbachev “came across with a stronger statement than we had anticipated. We got everything we wanted.” Noting Gorbachev’s strong concern about possible use of force, Bush expresses his hope that sanctions could work so that force would not be necessary. He also informs Kohl that he will not be able to attend the ceremony of German unification on October 3, as he has already informed Gorbachev in Helsinki. Kohl expresses understanding and full support for the U.S. position in the Gulf.

The President: Hello, Helmut! How are you? I wanted to give you a report on my meetings in Helsinki.

Chancellor Kohl: It made an excellent impression. I spoke with Gorbachev yesterday on the telephone. We talked about other things, but also about this. He is very pleased.

The President: I am glad. He came across with a stronger statement than we had anticipated. We got everything we wanted. He is very concerned about the use of force, but I had a very frank and open discussion with him about what might happen if there should be a provocation. We addressed ourselves to the food question also. I think he agrees with us that regular shipments of foodstuffs are banned by the U.N. sanctions. However, some kinds of humanitarian shipments, especially for children, could be considered so long as there are international observers to ensure that the food gets to the children.

He thinks the sanctions will work. I am beginning to think so, too. Yesterday, Fahd, Ozal, and Mitterrand all told me the sanctions are having a serious impact on Iraq. So I am basically pleased and just wanted to touch base with you.

A second issue: I am very sorry I won’t be able to come on October 3. Brent has already conveyed that to Horst Teltschik. It is a horribly complex time for me. I hope you understand. I hate letting you down like this.

Chancellor Kohl: George, let me say on that last point that of course I have total understanding for your position. I indicated that when we last spoke.

The President: I know you did. I appreciate your understanding.

Chancellor Kohl: Among friends, it must be possible to say when there are problems without creating a big hubbub. We have come a long way together and have a long way to go. Let me suggest on that day that you send a message to the Germans.

The President: Absolutely. Would you like a televised or a written message?

Chancellor Kohl: A televised message would be very good.

The President: We will get a tape and have our people contact your Embassy to get the right size and specifications. I will get that out well in advance.

Chancellor Kohl: That is a very good idea. As to Helsinki and what you told me about the Gulf situation, I totally agree with you. I welcome it if sanctions are taking effect. In my discussions with Jim Baker I will try to work together with him as to what we Germans can do. At the very latest, in one week's time we will be able to say what the Germans can do and will do. I want to help, but you know the limits we have. But under no circumstances do I want a situation in which the Germans are made out to be the number one exporter, but when responsible action is required they are not there. That is not our policy.

The President: We understand that. Don't worry about that. Maybe things are moving out there. I still worry about terrorist acts, but I am encouraged that those close to the scene think the sanctions are taking hold.

Chancellor Kohl: I hope so, too.

The President: It was good talking to you, Helmut.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained in 2009 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 112: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Shevardnadze, New York, 1:15 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.

October 1, 1990

Shevardnadze arrives in the United States to attend the U.N. General Assembly and to finalize the CFE and START treaties with Baker. In this meeting at the White House, President Bush and the Soviet foreign minister devote most of their time to discussion of the Persian Gulf. The Soviet Union is working with its Arab allies to put pressure on Saddam Hussein to withdraw and to persuade him there is no alternative to fulfilling the U.N. sanctions. The Soviet priority here is to keep the resolution peaceful and not to resort to force. Bush praises Soviet efforts in the region but asks Shevardnadze to give “more thought to what happens if sanctions against Iraq are not effective.”

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Congratulations on your brilliant speech. You must be very tired.

The President: There are big domestic issues, with the budget situation. We are trying to get the deficit down. There will be a big fight with Congress, even in our own Party.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Still, you must be happy to know how many parties you have. We don’t even know how many we have.

The President: Ours sometimes act like more than two. On this budget agreement, only one third of the Republicans in Congress are for what I want to do.

Let me start by saying that I meant what I said in the U.N. about U.S.-Soviet cooperation. I know your historic relations with Iraq have made your position difficult. Jim has filled me in on his many conversations with you. Let me say just one thing on the arms control front. As I said in Helsinki, it is important that both I and President Gorbachev push our bureaucracies to get this done. Jim has a certain flexibility, because I want to see a successful conclusion. We will need to be as flexible as possible.

There are only two other subjects I would ask you to touch on if you would. First, on Salvador, we are troubled that the FMLN will not go forward toward a peaceful resolution of that question. Second, having seen the text of your outstanding speech, I want to ask if you have given more thought to what happens if sanctions against Iraq are not effective.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I would like to convey best wishes and best regards from President Gorbachev. Let me say at the outset, we regard as very timely your letter of September 17. It is an excellent idea to give the Secretary of State and me the necessary authority to make decisions—not because we love power and authority.

The President: I'm not so sure about that on our side.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: We are at a stage when decisions must be taken. It is impossible to do in Geneva or Vienna, so we have to do it. I think we can now say, given what we have achieved, that we can confidently state that the Paris Summit will take place and be a success. There are still some problems with aircraft, but we can solve these if James helps.

Secretary Baker: Our flexibility is already on the table.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Second, we have reason to hope for substantial progress on START. Two or three major questions can be settled soon, right away. Then there will be another meeting with James in November. I think we can resolve all questions, thanks to your support. This means in November we can probably discuss your visit to Moscow and the timing.

The President: I want very much to come.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Let me again refer to your speech today. I think your U.N. address will be of great impact in the future in solidifying the positive trends we see in the world. I think it was very important what you said about U.S.-Soviet relations, because if we are to speak of a new world order, U.S.-Soviet relations will be the main support of that order. This is the sixth UNGA I have attended. Comparing the remarks made by the U.S. over the years, I note a new quality in our relations. I am emotional when I say that.

The President: I feel the same way.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Thank you for what you said about the Soviet Union. If I may speak frankly and openly, it is very important for us, given the problems we face at home. I regard as very important the substantial support you expressed for the UN. I think I know the response, having talked to several of my colleagues. Your remarks were appreciated by everyone.

Concerning Iraq, it was difficult for us to take the initial decision. I knew Saddam was a difficult man. I remember the question James asked in Irkutsk: whether I thought that the concentration of troops would result in an invasion. I said no, because I didn't think it logical. But we took the right decision. Either we support the new world order, or we support the law of the jungle, as you said in your speech. It is either of those two. What we have done is right. It is very important that your speech was a clear, constructive stand in favor of a peaceful resolution. All points of emphasis were very important. I think a peaceful resolution is possible. I have been discussing this with James Baker.

I think the Arab factor is very important. We have to get them united against Saddam Hussein. I think this is possible. You know the position that Yemen took before, and I know that you worked with Yemen and others. We did, too. At the U.N. Security Council everyone thought Yemen would vote against. Even the speech of their foreign minister seemed against. When he raised his hand in favor, I was surprised. He hadn't had time to change his speech but must have received last minute instructions. I think Jordan will also take a more constructive stand, and we can work with the Algerians. Maybe we should discuss patterns of our work in parallel with the Arabs. I firmly believe we can realistically hope to

make Saddam Hussein withdraw from Kuwait. He must see that there is no other way out. I know the capacity of that country. It is not so powerful. Grave internal problems are about to emerge. One danger is the risk of an adventurous step.

The President: Yes, a provocation. I worry about that very much. It might be a terrorist act. Terrorists were speaking at that conference in Jordan. This is very worrying. I share your concern that the man might act irrationally.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Yes. He is capable of that, but if he gets no support from the Arab world it will be difficult for him to take such a step. Today you pointed to further steps in the process, including Arab-Israeli negotiations. You have stolen some of our important arguments.

The President: What we don't want is to let him link the invasion to Israel. That is not acceptable. But to hold out hope to get progress on the Israeli-Palestine question is correct.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Yes, I think that's right. There will be further consultations with Jim about how to work with the Arabs, and also about how to act in the Security Council if there is not a successful result on the basis of the resolutions.

The President: I have seen your statement and appreciate it. I encourage you to talk to Jim Baker. I'm just not sure Saddam will act rationally. That is what is troubling me.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: Yes, indeed. There is this risk, this danger, but there is also another possibility. He could make a turnabout and leave Kuwait. He is a man capable of that kind of act, too.

The President: Someone else said the same thing.

Brent Scowcroft: Perez de Cuellar.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I met Saddam eighteen months ago in the context of mediation between Iran and Iraq. I was trying to persuade him to take elementary steps, which he said were categorically impossible. Now two months ago he made a complete turnabout. So I would not rule this out if he feels he is in total isolation and if the Arabs indicate this to him. For self-preservation, he might reverse himself. It was important in your speech that you said there could be a discussion of broader issues after an Iraqi withdrawal. The Iranian factor is very important. There is certainly some reaction in the country to a foreign military presence, but as for Iranian attitudes toward the invasion and aggression their views are very clear. Both Rafsanjani and their foreign minister told me their views.

You mentioned Salvador. I will be discussing this with Jim Baker. There is some movement. We are working with the guerillas. They are difficult, but the government, too, is not easy to deal with. We are ready to establish diplomatic relations with the Government of El Salvador. Yesterday we reestablished relations with Honduras. It is possible with Salvador, too. It would expand our ability for dialogue. Yesterday we also established diplomatic relations with South Korea and have established consular relations with Israel.

The President: I think this is very important.

Secretary Baker: On the Secretary General's mediation, Gonzalez, Salinas, and Perez have agreed to act as "friends of the Secretary General" to see if they can move forward. We need someone who can have influence on Cuba.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: It is difficult to find such a person. I will try. I will talk again with them, but I have done so a number of times.

The President: I know you have.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: They're in a difficult position, economically and socially.

The President: There [sic] are isolated, in this hemisphere at least. It is an irony: Cuba could be a wonderful participant in this hemisphere under different circumstances.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: It will take them some time to really comprehend what is happening in the world. He is a man with some vision, but it needs to change.

The President: I appreciate you coming over. I am looking forward to hearing from Jim about your discussions.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: I think we will be able to discuss the entire range of issues.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 113: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

October 20, 1990

As Gorbachev's personal envoy to the Middle East, Yevgeny Primakov, is about to arrive in Moscow after meetings with Saddam Hussein and a stop in Washington—where he spoke with Bush—the U.S. president sends an urgent message to Gorbachev through Matlock and Chernyaev. Although he was in favor of Primakov's mission to probe Saddam, he is now concerned that Primakov discussed with the Iraqi dictator what would happen after the withdrawal, including hints about an international conference on the Middle East. Bush is anxious that the withdrawal be truly unconditional, as agreed with Gorbachev in Helsinki, and he is especially concerned about possible linkage to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. Bush warns that if there is linkage, "[Saddam] would profit from his invasion, and in doing so, he would likely acquire a standing of heroic proportions in the Arab world."

For Ambassador Matlock's eyes only.

Dear Jack:

Please deliver to Cherniaev the following message from President Bush to President Gorbachev. It should be delivered before Primakov returns to Moscow, Saturday evening, October 20.

Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

I have just seen Yevgeniy Primakov and heard his report on his meeting with Saddam Hussein. At the outset, let me say how much I appreciate the fact that you sent Mr. Primakov here and the spirit of his visit. It is yet another indication of just how much the relationship between our two countries has developed. I welcomed his observations based on his long acquaintance with Saddam Hussein. Our discussions were useful. I know that you will hear first-hand from Mr. Primakov about our discussion. But I wanted to write to you right away in order to underscore several of my concerns about some elements of our conversation. I am afraid that going to Saddam with a proposal detailing what we are willing to do after he withdraws would violate the basic principles you and I embraced in Helsinki. Rather than insisting on Saddam's unconditional withdrawal, this approach would offer him significant "face-savers" that he would inevitably present as a "reward."

In other words, he would profit from his invasion, and in doing so, he would likely acquire a standing of heroic proportions in the Arab world. He would be seen as someone who can overcome all odds, and his way of doing business would become the norm in the Arab world. It would eliminate any chance we

have of brokering peace talks between Israel and the Arabs. That is not a prescription for peace and stability in the area. In addition, it would run counter to the view I know we share that in dealing with this first real crisis of the post Cold War era, we cannot permit an aggressor to profit in any way from aggression. Anything less would repeat the mistakes of the 1930's.

Indeed, Saddam would misread this and see it as a sign of weakness. Rather than paving the way to his withdrawal, an approach of this kind would probably convince him that the coalition against him is beginning to unravel.

I remain convinced that the signs of Saddam's recognition of his real situation—something about which Mr. Primakov spoke—result from the real pressure of the whole world being against him. The two of us—the United States and the USSR—have led the way. Our cooperation has cemented the international consensus. It reflects our new and growing partnership and it also reflects our joint responsibility in shaping a new international order where aggression has no place.

Our cooperation, our resolve, and our collective efforts to increase the pressure on Saddam Hussein are the only way to settle this crisis peacefully. He must come to see that there is no place in the world for his aggression, no excuse for his brutal destruction of a country and its people, and no tolerance whatsoever for his inhumane and uncivilized treatment of innocent men, women and children. As I explained to Mr. Primakov, I am now more convinced than ever that we must succeed in this matter because of Saddam Hussein's treatment of our embassy's people in Kuwait and because of the systematic brutalizing and dismantling of Kuwait, a member of the United Nations and the Arab League.

I believe Saddam is slowly getting the message; that is why he is prepared to probe now. We should not weaken our common front or the messages we send, Mikhail.

Sincerely,
George Bush

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0304-F12 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 114: Letter from Gorbachev to Bush

November 6, 1990

In response to Bush's October 20 letter, Gorbachev informs the U.S. president about his recent visits to Spain and France, where he hoped to build his own coalition for a political solution in the Persian Gulf and persuade the Europeans that a military solution in Iraq should be avoided. This is also the message of this letter to Bush. Although Soviet envoy Primakov's mission did not produce concrete results, Gorbachev has decided to give it more time and not cut off contacts with Saddam Hussein because "there is still a chance to prevent bloodshed." He also explains his choice of words at the October 29 Paris press conference, where he called the use of force "unacceptable." In Russian, he says he used the word "undesirable" [неприемлем]. However, he warns Bush again that, "if a war should break out taking thousands of human lives this would also be a blow on [sic] the process geared toward a new world order."

Dear Mr. President,

I wish to share with you my thoughts prompted by your frank and friendly letter of October 20, and not by that letter alone. Let me tell you that the difficult problems outlined in your message constantly preoccupy myself, too. In this context, please accept my sincere thanks for the confidentiality with which you related your impressions from your discussions with my special representative. Let me tell you very frankly that it was precisely this kind of reaction—consistent with the new nature of our relationship, both personal and on the state level—that I was counting on.

This is why, in the same spirit of trust and desire to fully understand one's partner that has developed between ourselves, I would like to convey to you my assessments dealing with the two major recent events in the Soviet and, actually, the world politics. I am referring to my state visits to Spain and France.

It is quite possible that someone may have pondered this question: How did Gorbachev manage to carve out some time for talks abroad when there is such a mountain heap of problems inside the country, at such a point critical for perestroika? Indeed, it was not an easy thing to do, but you, like perhaps no other leader in the world, understand the special responsibility of our countries for what is happening in the world, and hence, the enduring need to weigh and to coherently balance the internal and external factors. I couldn't really postpone those talks that were long overdue, particularly on the eve of the truly historic pan-European meeting in Paris.

First, about Spain. I will not burden you with recounting the official results—you no doubt know them.

Perhaps, at first neither I, nor the Spanish leaders expected such a condensed and super-substantive conversation. But for me the experience of Spain and its

people who found the strength to overcome the consequences of a protracted dictatorship in an orderly and peaceful fashion and to break into the open field of free democratic development and take a worthy place in the international community, was very important.

All of us were most favorably impressed by the royal couple who played such an important role in the critical period of Spain's transition to democracy.

As a result of our talks—and those were facilitated by the substance of our conversations, the very spirit of the new dialogue, and the nature of the documents agreed upon—our relations with Spain have been given a well-assured prospect.

Now about my visit to Paris where we shall all soon see each other. Every meeting with President Mitterrand adds something new, both to our politics and French ones. Essentially, this is an interaction—extremely important for both our countries and Europe—based on trust, which was reflected in a unique treaty on concord and cooperation. This is a new word in contemporary diplomacy. This is also a symbol of the viability of the “two-tier approach” where one track, which is the Helsinki multilateral process, goes parallel with and complements the other, which is the development of the bilateral relations. And I cannot fail to point out here once again that I trace back the beginning of a new stage in the European and world politics to the agreement that you and I reached—not to consider each other as enemies.

A major place in the talks in both capitals was given to reviewing the economic ties which are particularly essential to us at present. In this regard, I am quite satisfied with the results. We found understanding and a sincere desire to help.

In Paris, as in Madrid, despite the shortage of time, we were able to touch upon all the main European and world problems. And, of course, a great deal of attention was devoted to the situation in the Middle East, and above all, to the Persian Gulf crisis.

The mission of my special representative, E.M. Primakov, continued, and the Security Council discussions went on during the same days. As you know, we wanted to take advantage of even the smallest chance in Bagdad, and this is why we asked you and other Security Council members to postpone a little bit the vote on the resolution which has now been adopted.

Let me tell you the main thing from the outset: in Bagdad, as in other capitals, we are proceeding strictly from the positions that you and I agreed to in Helsinki. We have maintained this posture and shall continue to do so firmly. Our unanimity is key to restoring justice in that region. I have said it publicly, and will tell you again: the aggression must be reversed and the aggressor himself cannot expect a reward. In my private conversation with President Mitterrand I stressed once again: all of us opposing the aggression “in our broad mutual understanding should strictly, consistently and firmly abide by the decisions adopted collectively by the U.N. Security Council”.

At the news conference in Paris I said: we cannot allow, we must not give any excuse to Iraq, to President Hussein's regime to imagine or hope for some

kind of altercation between us, between all those who oppose his aggression. Not a single crack, not even the smallest fissure. You and I—and we had complete understanding on it in Helsinki—are committed to a political solution, for a new war in the Middle East would have incalculable consequences. And for the sake of a peaceful settlement we shall, if need be, intensify efforts in all areas—political, economic, and moral pressure on the aggressor. I even told Mitterrand, guided by our discussions in Helsinki, that it is my deep conviction that “even the presence of the US troops and those of other countries pursues the objective of achieving a political solution and restoring justice”.

Our ministers have already exchanged their impressions about E.M. Primakov’s trips to Bagdad. Let me give you my personal view: thanks to the toughening of the sanctions Saddam Hussein appears to have begun to ponder the dangerous impasse he has gotten himself into. We relayed to Saddam Hussein our arguments and conclusions based on the serious situation in which Iraq has found itself. Hussein was told that if he did not pull out his troops from Kuwait, a military strike might become inevitable. Some shifts seem to begin to lurk at this time, but it is certainly too early to speak about serious results. In a few days we shall discuss this in more detail here with Mr. Baker. Contacts with Saddam Hussein must not be broken off, while there is still a chance to prevent bloodshed. After all, if a war should break out taking thousands of human lives this would also be a blow on [sic] the process geared toward a new world order. This, too, if you will, would be a “reward”, albeit terrible, for the aggressor. It was with this in mind that I said at the news conference in Paris that such a path is unacceptable to all. (Incidentally, used in this context in some media this term was translated as “inadmissible”, “unfeasible”. This gave rise to misunderstandings even at the diplomatic level. The Russian meaning of this word is “undesirable”.)

In Paris I stressed the need for an active use of the Arab factor. The inner logic of this idea is to prevent the “let-somebody-else-do-it” tendency among the Arabs who sort of shift all the responsibility on the Security Council and you, the United States. They should be tied more firmly to the real process of defusing the crisis. Let them think and offer their suggestions demonstrating their active involvement in the international efforts. It would be easier for Saddam Hussein to backtrack if the Security Council resolutions (without any substantive digression) were draped in an Arab-Moslem mantle.

There is one more priority aspect in our peaceful diplomatic efforts (as in yours, for that matter)—the lives of our citizens in Iraq. As the USSR President, I am simply duty-bound to do all in my power so as to prevent loss of life among them. You understand that given our present situation at home, this is of particular importance. After the meetings with my representative Saddam Hussein knows what importance I attach to this. I don’t want to delude myself, but the Iraqi leadership’s agreement to the gradual departure of the Soviet specialists and the softening of Bagdad’s position with respect to the hostages from some other countries make me hope that some sprouts of realism may yet germinate in Bagdad. The rejection of a barbaric tactic of hostage-taking, displayed by the world

community, is yielding some results. Pressure should be intensified in this area as well.

In dealing with the immediate task of rebuffing Hussein in his unlawful claims on Kuwait, one should not, I believe, put off the more general problem of the future of that region, including the curbing of the arms race there, confidence-building measures, the regional security structure, the Palestinian problem and, generally, that of Arabs-Israel.

I recognize that it is tactically not advisable to directly link this whole range of problems (or even one—Palestinian) with eliminating the consequences of Hussein's aggression. But we would benefit from creating the hope in the Arab world that you and I, and the Security Council, keep all this within their field of vision and shall promptly address it after Kuwait's sovereignty has been restored.

Those are the thoughts, George, that I wanted to share with you at this no easy time. I think that in Paris we will have an opportunity to have a more detailed conversation.

Sincerely,
M.GORBACHEV

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library.*]

Document No. 115: Memorandum from James Baker to the
President: "My Day in Moscow, November 8, 1990"

November 9, 1990

In this highly revealing memorandum, Baker informs the President about his "rather extraordinary" recent discussions with Shevardnadze (for four hours) and Gorbachev (two hours) in Moscow. Baker's mission was to persuade the Soviet leaders to agree to a U.N. resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Here he describes the differences between the two officials on the subject. Even though Shevardnadze is not in favor of using force now, he thinks it would have to be used eventually; he is also highly skeptical of the peace missions, not only by Primakov, but also by the Europeans. Gorbachev is "torn" about the use of force, but wants to avoid it in principle because "[his] image of the new international order is such that he has a hard time reconciling the fact that we might need to use force in this initial test." Baker explained to the Soviets the U.S. position that the resolution must be passed this month while the United States chairs the UNSC and because the next couple of months represent a brief window before "the rainy season, Ramadan, the Hajj." A skillful diplomat, Baker saved his strongest arguments for Gorbachev, appealing to his need for close ties with the United States. He concludes: "I believe their stake in good relations and desire for partnership with us will lead them in the right direction." On the domestic situation, Baker noticed Gorbachev's increasingly tough rhetoric about the need for stability and order, noting with concern that "[he] was uneasy about the tone and direction of these comments. I don't know if they presage some kind of crackdown, but we will have to watch the situation closely."

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From: James A. Baker, III
Subject: My Day in Moscow, November 8, 1990

1. Secret—Entire text
2. I have had long and rather extraordinary discussions with Shevardnadze and Gorbachev today. I'll give you the full blow-by-blow when I get back. For now, let me pass on the highlights of the day and our discussions. We talked about the Gulf for nearly six hours (four with Shevardnadze, two with Gorbachev). Each listened, explained their concerns, and noticeably moved during the course of the discussions. Shevardnadze, in particular, came close to our position that a UNSC resolution authorizing force should be passed this month and become operative six-eight weeks later. He actually called Gorbachev on the phone and pushed hard to have him go along with our approach. He went out to Gorbachev's dacha twenty minutes before me to lobby him further. Gorbachev is close but not there yet.
3. In general, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze seemed to be acting on certain assumptions:

- A) The US and the Soviet Union must stay together on the gulf. They both said it's essential to the success of th [sic] policy, and is reflective of the fact that our mutual well-being, and futures are linked. (Shevardnadze went so far as to say that a failure by us in the Gulf would damage perestroika. Our success would be a success for them—and our failure would be a real blow to them. Gorbachev said much the same thing.)
 - B) Saddam Hussein must clearly unmistakably fail. They emphasized that his aggression must be reversed. Any hope for a new peaceful era depended on this, and on denying him any victory—no matter how small. To this end, we could not stand still. We had to be active now in pursuing further steps to reverse his aggression. (Activity that did not appear to mean peace missions. Shevardnadze was critical of the Nakasone, Brandt, and, yes, Primakov missions. For his part, Gorbachev noted our disappointment with Primakov's mission and said he, too, had been disappointed.)
 - C) Gorbachev and Shevardnadze felt sanctions might yet work and it's premature to play our last diplomatic card—a card that leaves us no choice but to use force if it fails. While prepared to be active in pursuing more steps in the UNSC to build the pressure on Saddam, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze (certainly at the beginning of the day) were ambivalent about a UNSC resolution that authorizes force or “all means necessary to implement UNSC resolution 660.” It's not that they reject the idea of setting a deadline or even posing an ultimatum. It's that they still feel it's too early to do that.
4. I explained long and hard why time and circumstances would not be on our side. Indeed, I outlined why if we couldn't pass such a resolution this month we might not be able to do so for several months—something that could get us into the rainy season, Ramadan, the Hajj, and all the way to next summer before the use of force could be contemplated.
 5. Shevardnadze found this argument compelling, because he saw how this might make it difficult for us to sustain our forces in the area. I emphasized this point and also said if we couldn't sustain our forces or had to reduce them it would convince Saddam that he could prevail.
 6. As a result, Shevardnadze began to change his position, a position that was premised on further UNSC resolutions that would show international solidarity, heighten pressure on Saddam and basically exhaust all diplomatic, non-military options over time.
 7. To a lesser extent Gorbachev bought this line of argument but I found him torn more about having to use force at all. (While I think Shevardnadze is not enthusiastic about using force, he is more inclined to think it will have to be used eventually.) For his part, Gorbachev's image of the new international order is such that he has a hard time reconciling the fact that we might need to use force in this initial test. He reflected that sentiment in his letter to you and he said as much to me today, observing that we want this era to be different from the Cold War and based on different kinds of norms.

8. I answered him in two ways: first, it's hard to establish recognized norms of civilized and peaceful behavior if a brutal aggressor who quite simply rejects these norms is allowed to succeed because the will to use force is absent. Second, that the only way to produce a peaceful outcome—our clear preference—was to convince Saddam that if he didn't withdraw peacefully he would be forced out militarily. Only when Saddam becomes convinced that a massive military response was imminent would a peaceful outcome become possible.
9. That was the paradox. That was the reason that our approach would give us a chance to resolve this peacefully—i.e., Saddam would realize that the international community would support the use of force and he would have only a limited amount of time to avert a certain defeat. Nothing else would signal him so starkly and credibly. And yet a resolution passed now, but operative only after the beginning of the year, would also show that we had given him every chance to withdraw peacefully. And, indeed, that we had given sanctions a fair amount of time (five and one-half to six months) to work.
10. Shevardnadze said several times that he saw the logic of my arguments, and I felt Gorbachev, too, was being persuaded by them. But he didn't want to be pushed into making a decision today, and clearly a part of him would still like to delay going down such a definitive path. I think that's why he suggested a kind of interim step: pass two resolutions. The first would warn Saddam that if he didn't withdraw by a certain date, we'd pass a second one that would effectively authorize the use of force.
11. While noting that he was clearly trying to be responsive, I said I saw several problems:
 - Our original UNSC resolution 660 called for immediate withdrawal. Now we'd be passing a resolution that [sic] gave him some time to do so. This would actually look like a retreat from our earlier position.
 - Having passed the first resolution, what if we couldn't get the second resolution. Procedurally, we probably couldn't get both resolutions through this month and we might have real problems once Yemen was in the chair. Substantively, Saddam might pull back partially or for the first time offer a realistic, if unacceptable, partial deal as a way of undercutting consensus behind the use of force.
 - If we never got to the second resolution, we would have shot our wad and be finished trying to work through the UNSC. That would have the effect of destroying the UNSC as a credible mechanism for pre-empting, managing, or settling conflicts in this new era.
12. Gorbachev's response was to say, well it was just a thought, and he needed to think more about this. Shevardnadze later tried to say that we might formally link the two resolutions, making the second one "predetermined" if Saddam had not pulled out by a certain date. Interestingly, Tarasenko argued against his boss saying you couldn't guarantee such a linkage, you'd look feckless if you couldn't deliver the second resolution, and this would in all

likelihood ensure a move away from the UNSC and to the use of Article 51 to liberate Kuwait.

13. The upshot: they want to look at options and get back to us before Paris. I emphasized we didn't want to push them but we needed to be able to act while we had the chair at the UNSC and if no decision were made until Paris we might not have time afterwards.
14. My own sense is that in the end they will go along with us. Gorbachev made a real point of saying they'd stick with us. And he emphasized the importance of acting under UNSC authorization, not Article 51, particularly because it would ensure our continued unity. As I said several times, we saw the extraordinary value of them participating with us if force was needed, but understood their problems (internal preoccupation, Afghan syndrome) with not doing so. It would be far harder for us to understand their blocking us from the clearly preferred option of a UNSC resolution. They got the point, and I believe their stake in good relations and desire for partnership with us will lead them in the right direction. But it may take some time and effort to get there.

Other Issues and Impressions

15. Gorbachev and the national holiday. Gorbachev seemed buoyed by the lack of serious violence or counter-demonstrations yesterday. He didn't mention the incident on Red Square and Shevardnadze downplayed it. Gorbachev felt that the real "silent majority" (his words) had spoken yesterday by not heeding the calls for counter-demonstrations. I wonder if this is wishful thinking or an accurate reading, particularly because I had the sense that the threat of crackdowns and violence might have diminished the crowds.
16. Gorbachev's hints at the need to impose order. Gorbachev spoke of the need to create tolerance and that this might be the key to achieving a market economy. However, he also said there was a yearning for order and stability and said some "tough steps might be needed. We couldn't sacrifice the reform process for the sake of someone's ambitions or accept the disintegration of our society." He said a fine line had to be maintained between moving forward and preserving stability. I noted that was a line that was very important to maintain. While he said it was important to reject the conservative ability to exploit the desire for stability, I was uneasy about the tone and direction of these comments. I don't know if they presage some kind of crackdown, but we will have to watch the situation closely.
17. Getting food from the outside for the winter. Gorbachev noted a paradox: moving toward the market had led collective farmers to withhold their produce from certain areas and cities, requiring the center to hold food reserves as a kind of insurance policy. He would be going to the Germans and other Europeans for emergency food supplies on a credit or grant basis for this purpose. He said he might be coming to us once he knew his needs better. He'd be interested in soybeans, among other things, and we may want to look at what we could do if we decide to be responsive.

18. Arms control. I think we've finally closed out the nettlesome CFE issues. But every time you think you've settled everything, something else crops up. In any case, I think—and hope—we've finally done it. On START, we closed out the non-circumvention issue, and may, with some effort, be able to resolve the remaining issues in our next ministerial. That would put us on track for a January Summit. (Gorbachev is eager to nail down the Summit date, but joked that a mid-January Summit might be especially interesting given what we might be doing in the Gulf at that time.)

Baker
#4037

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA request 2009-0275-S and 98-0099-F/3 by the National Security Archive. (Original in Brent Scowcroft Collection, Special Separate USSR Notes File, Gorbachev Files, Folder: Gorbachev (Dobrynin) Sensitive July-December 1990 [2].)]

Document No. 116: Record of the Main Content of Conversation between Gorbachev and Bush, Paris

November 19, 1990

An interesting aspect of this one-on-one conversation, occurring on the margins of the Paris CSCE summit, is that neither Gorbachev nor Bush mentions the grand themes of European integration or the common European home, which has been Gorbachev's highest aspiration. Instead, they focus on their immediate priorities—the domestic situation in the USSR and the war in the Persian Gulf. This is a moment where both leaders need each other probably more than ever. Gorbachev essentially warns Bush that he is going to introduce “methods resembling harsh administrative measures” for restoring order in the country, especially to deal with economic crimes, saying that even President Roosevelt had to take similar steps. He tells Bush about his recent speech to the Supreme Soviet and the deputies' approval of his proposals dealing with “order and discipline,” even “presidential rule, a presidential system, where executive power will be directly under the president's control.” This is exactly what Shevardnadze will warn about when he resigns unexpectedly in the end of December, “the coming dictatorship.” Although not endorsing it directly, Bush reacts with understanding, raising only the issue of the Baltics. He tries to persuade Gorbachev to let the Baltic republics leave the Union and not resort to violence there.

After discussing the Soviet internal situation, Bush asks to “turn to the most difficult, festering issue”: the Persian Gulf. Now, as never before, Bush needs Gorbachev to ensure a U.N. Security Council resolution on the use of force. This request goes against Gorbachev's often-expressed preference to avoid violence in the Gulf and could be damaging for him domestically because of the strong opposition to military action among the Soviet leadership. Bush uses all his power of persuasion to sway Gorbachev to lend his support. He confides that he wanted to speak in private in order to “pour out my heart to you.” He insists that he does not want to use force either. Gorbachev eventually agrees, in part because it is important for him to manage the Gulf conflict strictly within the U.N. framework where the USSR has veto power.

The conversation is filled with assurances of partnership and the future possibilities of U.S.-Soviet relations. In fact, after the Soviets vote in favor of the U.N. resolution, Gorbachev is never genuinely consulted about the course of action in the Gulf, while the United States mainly restricts its consultations to its NATO partners and Saudi Arabia.

[...]

Bush: I think that the decision to award you the Nobel Peace Prize, which was received very warmly in the United States, also represents an expression of confidence that you would be able to find answers to all the hard questions that you are faced with.

[...] You are living through a difficult time. Of course, I don't want to interfere in your internal affairs in any way, but let me say this: we will try to do all we can to help you in this difficult cause.

Gorbachev: Thank you. You are right when you say that we are living through a difficult time. But it cannot be otherwise, if we are really changing, implementing cardinal transformation of our society. There is no road back, notwithstanding all the problems and underwater rocks that we discovered. I constantly say to my colleagues and to our citizens: we should look for answers to our problems by moving forward, not by casting backward glances.

However, the rate of transformation, the speed of the movement, the priorities are a different issue. Here one has to think. Each country has its own priorities, and even each of our republics differs from the others, has its own distinctive features. But we all must move forward, in the understanding that we don't have much time. Henceforth—the need for decisive actions.

What is the utmost concern of our society right now? First of all it is instability—economic, political, and in the interethnic sphere. That is why people more and more express themselves in favor of stability, for decisive actions of the authorities, for strengthening of the government, so that we do not lose everything that we achieved in the years of *perestroika* and the democratic reforms.

That is why to some extent, sometimes, we have to use methods resembling harsh administrative measures, so that we do not allow the unfolding processes to turn to chaos. Everybody had to turn to such methods at the sharp turns of history, including President Roosevelt.

How did events unfold recently? I was working on measures for a transition to a market economy, stabilization of the monetary-financial sphere, speeding up the discussions of the union treaty and restructuring of the power structures. But after the two-week parliamentary recess for the anniversary of the revolution, the deputies came back from their electoral districts, where constituents gave them a thrashing, and immediately they demanded to change the agenda of the Supreme Soviet, and to discuss the issue of the situation in the country. They stated that they wanted to hear the president, and I agreed to speak to them on the next day.

My testimony contained an assessment of the situation and proposals about how to move forward. The deputies agreed with my assessment, but not quite with the proposals. They saw them as insufficient. After listening to them for the whole day, I sensed that people wanted more decisive, even harsh, steps, without waiting for the new union treaty or other decisions. I already had ideas about what specifically had to be done, but I thought I would introduce them a bit later. But there I saw that I had to propose them now; that I could not wait. I worked all night on my speech, where I presented eight points, which we need to implement urgently.

One hundred fifty people signed up to speak. You could feel great tension in the room. I asked for the floor. The room fell silent. After I gave a short speech, the room was silent at first, and then broke into applause.

Bush: We saw it on television. It made a very good impression. What will happen now?

Gorbachev: We will be moving in the same direction as we did before, but we will carry out serious organizational changes. In essence, we are talking about presidential rule, a presidential system, where executive power will be directly under the president's control. New structures will be created—economic, political, oversight—to ensure this.

Bush: And what would Yeltsin's place in this [system] be? Would it strengthen your position in relation to the Russian republic?

Gorbachev: You know, in our society, people are mainly in favor of political stabilization; they reject those who rock the boat. And one more thing—in all the republics people speak in favor of the union more and more decisively. And people raise the question—what is preventing cooperation between Gorbachev and Yeltsin? I answer them honestly—nothing is preventing it. There is a great objective need for such cooperation now. People tell us—if you cannot agree [with each other], you are not good for anything.

Yeltsin built his reputation on negativity. People used to say—good job, he criticizes Gorbachev himself. However, now he has power, he has authority and, accordingly, responsibilities. And people are asking: what has changed? And he continues to blame the Center for all the problems.

Bush: As if he does not have to do anything himself.

Gorbachev: I think the society must sort it out. The strengthening of the presidential power is intended for stabilization of the situation in the country and circumscribing the opportunities for destructive forces. The new government will comprise reasonable, capable people regardless of any external circumstances. I will try to include him [Yeltsin] in this process. Unfortunately, around him, and also in the Moscow City Soviet and in Leningrad City Soviet, there are many windbags, who are not capable of doing anything. If not for the Center's assistance, Moscow and Leningrad would be in trouble.

Bush: For us it is hard to understand. We have a clear division of powers between the center and the states. We understand what you want to achieve: to preserve order and unity, which are necessary for the republics. And when that man sends his foreign minister and trade delegations everywhere, announcing that he couldn't care less about the Center, we just simply do not understand that.

Gorbachev: I told him that he must state clearly his position regarding the preservation of our Union. He then said that he had already spoken in that regard. But I said that such a statement was necessary, and finally he agreed and made an appropriate statement. But double morality is unacceptable. You cannot be saying one thing and doing another thing. I think that those structural changes that we will implement will force him to define his position faster: either we work together or one will have to leave.

And that's what's interesting: as soon as I raised the issue of order and discipline in my speech, literally on the next day Moscow stores started to fill up. This means that there were manipulations, actions by the mafia. Now we will deal with it seriously.

As soon as we get home, we intend to publish the draft of the Union Treaty, which will delineate clearly the powers of the Center and the republics.

Bush: The text of the speech prepared for me for this conference included references to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. However, after I read the text, I left out those references. I understood that this could put you in an awkward situation.

As you know, the United States had never recognized inclusion of those republics into the USSR. And when you talk about preservation of the Union, I recall Camp David where we discussed this question. You said then that your Constitution provides for a possibility of an orderly transition to independence for republics. And although I did not mention this issue in my speech, I hope that you understand that we have many people of Baltic origin in the United States and we hope that you will be able to ensure orderly progress in the process of self-determination. I repeat, I understood your problems and I did not want to add to them from outside. But we hope that it would be possible to find a way, which would allow [them] to carry out such a process of self-determination. What do you think about this?

Gorbachev: Lately we have been consulting often and extensively about the Union Treaty. At the same time, we started certain processes with the Baltics, and the current situation there is quite interesting. The situation there has worsened lately. The positions of the existing authorities are in danger. In Latvia and Lithuania the press launched a campaign of criticism. They sharply criticize Landsbergis, especially after he stated that he wants to get back his father's property. Peasants, workers, leading representatives of intelligentsia express sharp disapproval. The president of the republican Academy of Sciences spoke out recently.

People tell the authorities: it was better under the communists—and you are scroungers, self-seekers, you are good for nothing, just grabbing cars, dachas and other things. Meanwhile, even worse extremists, people who collaborated with Hitler in their time, and their children are lurking behind the backs of the present authorities. All in all, we have a lot of information that the situation there is close to an explosion.

Bush: But isn't it a fact that practically the entire population there is in favor of independence? Or, let's put it this way—that the majority would like to see their republics independent sooner or later?

Gorbachev: Not in a single republic does the leadership want to hold a referendum on this issue. Not even in Lithuania, where 80% of the population is Lithuanian.

Bush: You mean they are not confident that everybody would support them?

Gorbachev: Yes. We will publish the draft of the Union treaty, and when the treaty is ready, the republics will sign it. And then we will start a "divorce procedure" with those who will not sign.

Bush: In the framework of your Constitution?

Gorbachev: Precisely.

Bush: Now I suggest we turn to the most difficult, festering issue: the situation in the Persian Gulf. Jim Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze have been

discussing this problem in depth. You graciously received the secretary of state in Moscow. We take your position very seriously. I understand your words that we need prudence, patience and restraint.

A couple of days ago, when I was Chancellor Kohl's guest, I visited his native town, where you were recently. And then I visited one of our military bases and looked into the eyes of our boys, who are young enough to be our kids or grandkids. And I thought: how I wish they did not have to go into battle. I think that you too, when you took office, had the same feeling when you looked at the young Soviet soldiers.

I need your help on this issue. We have to get a U.N. resolution passed that would authorize the necessary measures, namely the use of force, in order to persuade Saddam Hussein that he must fulfill the demands of the United Nations. Frankly speaking, I do not see any other way to persuade him that he must do what the entire world demands of him.

We are dealing with a hard, unpredictable person. In terms of cruelty, he is right up there with Hitler. You know, I got in trouble for comparing him to Hitler. But looking at it, even Hitler did not block foreign embassies and did not use people as human shields. And when many American Jews said to me that one cannot compare Saddam to a person who was guilty of mass extermination of an entire nation, I responded that today they surrounded the American Embassy, tomorrow it might be somebody else's [embassy], not even mentioning the hostages—here he does not show mercy to any country.

I want you to know: in the United States right now the mood on this issue is not completely clear-cut. But if you look at the opinion polls, half of those who do not approve of my actions, believe that I should have attacked earlier. You add to those the 60% of Americans who support me, and you see solid support.

But I do not want to use force. However, I came to the conclusion that such a resolution is necessary. And thinking about how we want to build our relationship in the future, I believe that your support would serve as strong proof of our partnership.

This is why I am asking you to help me. And not even me so much—who knows, in two years, somebody else could become president. I am asking you to help do what is just. If you cannot give me your final answer right away, I would be prepared to understand you, but still, please keep in mind that your answer is extremely important for us.

Our two countries were opponents, but today we are working together. If you cannot help me in this case, we will still interact. But I am asking you to help [us] send this signal to Saddam. We believe that this would be sufficient to make Saddam do everything that is required of him.

I wanted to talk about this to you in private, not in the presence of our colleagues, for two reasons: to pour out my heart to you and to avoid putting you in a situation where you would have to give a final answer right now.

Gorbachev: I have thought it all over—our conversation with Baker, and your letter, Mr. President. This moment is exceptionally important not just for both of

us, but also for everything that we started to do in the world. If we do not prove now that we are capable, at this new stage of global development, of dealing with this kind of problem, it would mean that what we started does not mean all that much. If you and I are not capable to stop aggression, annexation, blatant violation of international law, it means that we are not doing what we should. No, we must prove the opposite, and that means that we must find a solution to this problem. This is first and most important.

Second. Due to the choice that we made in the Soviet Union (and I believe that you made a similar choice in the United States), we do not want to see the United States and its president in a difficult, critical situation. And if in this situation we part our ways, take separate roads, that would mean that we have not achieved much in our relations. Although, of course, in the future, we will probably have differences, and then we will have to sit down at a table and discuss them. But in this case, I am convinced, we must stay together with you.

In my heart of hearts, probably just like you, I very much want to avoid blood, avoid losses, avoid American boys being killed, because such bloodshed would be a blow against the U.S. president. And it would also be very bad for regular Arabs. That is why we prefer decisively that this settlement should be achieved without spilling blood. And I start from the assumption that you are also in favor of this. Because if the war starts, it could be much worse than Vietnam.

This is the dilemma that we must resolve. On the one hand—to try to avoid a military solution. On the other—to undertake one more step that would increase the pressure on Saddam Hussein.

When I was talking with Jim in Moscow, I implored him not to take the road of Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. We have to determine clearly that we would be acting strictly with the U.N. framework. This is very important.

Maybe for some part of the U.S. public opinion, this is not so clear. They may say why bother with the United Nations, with the Security Council, while Saddam Hussein is getting more insolent and is treating the United States like an insignificant state that can be forced to its knees. But I think that the position that you and I took is the right and responsible position.

Thus, after comprehensive thinking and analysis, we came to the conclusion that we should agree to passing of a U.N. Security Council resolution. We believe that this should be a two-tier resolution, so to say, that it should combine your proposal and mine.

The first part should contain essentially an ultimatum to Iraq to fulfill the U.N. resolutions. But we will give him a deadline, give him one last chance to change his mind. In the second part, it will say that in case this requirement is not fulfilled, all appropriate measures could be taken to restore justice.

We agree that such a resolution should be passed while you still hold the chairmanship of the Security Council.

In addition, we believe that during the period when the ultimatum is in force, we need to undertake a number of steps. I think our countries should find a possibility to meet with the Iraqi leadership at some level, for example at the level of

foreign ministers, and present them with our demands: you must leave Kuwait, free the people, otherwise the mechanism will be put into force, which would truly put you on your knees. Another option [would be] to send Peres de Cuellar with this message, as it was done during the Iran-Iraq war. However, this option appears to be weaker than the direct bilateral approach.

Bush: This bilateral approach, seems to me, has big advantages. What do you think should the term of the ultimatum be?

Gorbachev: Let us say, until the middle of January. After that, it would be permitted to use all appropriate means, and there would be no need for passing one more resolution. This would create a bridge to further actions, and this decision would be made while the United States still holds the chairmanship of the Security Council.

About China's position. We see that the Chinese are starting to maneuver. However, I do not think that they would veto the proposed resolution.

Bush: I think that if you and I take this approach, then the Chinese will follow us. You know that we have problems with the Chinese, but we start from the assumption that the Chinese do not want to be in isolation.

Gorbachev: It seems to me that you should lift the sanctions against China.

Bush: There are some legal problems here. I vetoed the congressional resolutions directed against China. And so far, I was able to defend my position. In general, I agree with you, but in our crazy system ...

Gorbachev: Now not only yours.

Bush: In any case, if you are talking with the Chinese, tell them that our administration is persistently aspiring to normalize relations. Cooperation in the U.N. framework will allow us to do even more in this direction.

I highly appreciate the position that you presented. I am very happy that we are coming to an agreement. We will act tactfully so that we can take your considerations into account as we develop the draft resolution. Such a resolution, formulated appropriately, will become a powerful signal and will allow us to save people's lives, lives of American soldiers. I do not want war.

Gorbachev: I think that such a two-tier resolution, in combination with our additional steps, will force Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. As far as the actual language is concerned, I think that we should not use the words "military force" in the resolution. And Shevardnadze and Baker should discuss which concrete steps we would undertake so that we would not be just sitting there with our hands in our laps. Besides, I think we should restrain all kinds of travelers and make sure the Iraqis understand that they will have to deal only with those who adopted the U.N. resolutions.

Bush: As far as military force is concerned, it must be clear from the formulation that it is not excluded. To tell you the truth, I am not a lawyer and I do not understand clearly what is the difference between the words "necessary" and "appropriate" measures.

Gorbachev: Formulations should be such that Saddam would understand everything.

Bush: Thank you, I am very grateful [to you] for your position. What are we going to tell the press?

Gorbachev: I think that first of all, we should confirm our line based on principle. The aggression must be repelled, and we intend to achieve this, acting within the framework of the United Nations, of its Security Council.

Bush: What are we going to say specifically about our conversation?

Gorbachev: We carried out a very serious exchange of opinions, analyzed the situation and came to the conclusion that our common approach has been and remains correct. We agreed that we should keep working together in the future, working within the framework of the U.N. Security Council in such a way that the aggressor does not get any leniency or reward. We came to the conclusion that in the nearest future, the situation should be addressed again in the framework of the U.N. Security Council. And we don't have to mention the resolution yet.

Bush: I agree.

I would like to say a couple of words about the conversation that you had with Jim Baker in Moscow. As far as I understand, you might soon need urgent assistance with food products and medicines. I am fully and wholeheartedly in favor of providing such assistance. I want you to know this. If need arises, we will be ready to act.

Gorbachev: Thank you, Mr. President.

Bush: Now I think we can join our colleagues, tell them about the results of our conversation and end this evening with a friendly dinner.

[Source: *Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, vol. 23, p. 176–181. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 117: Record of the Main Content of Conversation between Gorbachev and Bush, Paris

November 20, 1990

This brief conversation takes place during a break in the European summit in Paris. Gorbachev has just received a report from his Middle East envoy, Yevgeny Primakov, about Saddam Hussein's new willingness to negotiate with Bush in order to delay passage of the U.N. resolution on use of force.

Gorbachev: To continue our yesterday's conversation, I would like to let you know that I received a telegram from Ye. M. Primakov, in which he informs me about S. Hussein's new step.

S. Hussein expresses his readiness to repeal his decision about freeing Western and Japanese hostages in "groups" over three months and to free them all at the same time. He is also ready to start any negotiations with G. Bush. The only precondition that he sets is that Iraq would be guaranteed access to deep-water areas of the Persian Gulf.

Bush: This is an interesting report. It is clear that his precondition about the deep-water areas of the Gulf will create difficulties. Our ministers are having a separate conversation right now. Do they have this information?

Gorbachev: No. I will send it to them right now. You and I will exchange opinions after they discuss this issue.

Bush: I agree.

[Source: *Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, vol. 23, p. 185. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 118: Letter from Gorbachev to Bush

December 27, 1990

Gorbachev writes this letter to Bush after Shevardnadze's sudden resignation, in order to try to assure the U.S. president of the continuity of the relationship they have built. In his resignation speech, Shevardnadze warned of a coming dictatorship. He resigned partly in response to Gorbachev's turn to the right and a government reshuffling, but also because for the last three months he believed he had increasingly lost Gorbachev's trust on the Persian Gulf and other issues. In the letter, Gorbachev expresses his deep regret over his former foreign minister's decision, describing what he sees as his aide's inability to withstand criticism. He makes no mention of administrative measures, having already warned Bush about the coming expansion of presidential power during their conversation in November (see Document 115).

Dear George,

In the spirit of the friendly and trusting relationship that has developed between ourselves, I consider it to be my duty to convey to you some explanations concerning Eduard's resignation.

It has caused great agitation within the world public opinion and in the political quarters, a lot of guesses and, frankly, speculations that go far beyond this truly unfortunate episode. I said right there at the Congress—and you are aware of it—that to me his statement was totally unexpected. This is really so and this is what was particularly upsetting—not only because of his act of disloyalty to the President—the fact that he did so without consulting and without telling me in advance, his old friend and comrade, has no justification. That he was extremely tired, that the terrible workload had worn him out, that he, as we say, was giving it his damndest without sparing one bit of himself and at some point broke down—all that is true, and therefore one would like to be sympathetic to what he did, but there is no way I can approve of it. Whatever criticism there had been voiced against the Foreign Minister regarding the policies for which he had, after the President, the foremost responsibility, be that the criticism from Parliamentarians or from socio-political groups, and still less by certain media organs and all kinds of extremists and demagogues, did not justify such a reaction on the part of Eduard.

Criticism, including unjustified, unfair criticism, even one that hurts, is something which is inevitable in a democratic society to which we have resolved to aspire. You, George, know this better than I, and if everyone is going to resign in response to criticism, no serious policy, especially at a crucial, extremely difficult and turbulent stage in a society's development, will actually be possible to pursue. I talked with Eduard, even though I realized that he would not be able to go back on his resignation, for it would be a loss of face for him, an impossible

thing to do, given his sense of honor and dignity. I value very highly his contribution to our new foreign policy, to working out and implementing cardinal decisions, above all those concerning US-Soviet relationship, thanks to which you and I were able, within a short period of time, to change the very nature of world politics, the entire international atmosphere—both in Europe and in other major parts of the world. I believe those have been historic accomplishments on the path toward a peaceful period of our civilization, and I hope they are irreversible. I also greatly appreciate Eduard's role as a man of initiative and courage and as a consistent advocate of a profound internal perestroika which is proceeding with such difficulties at home. In both of those roles I shall be missing him very much, although I don't believe he is going to leave the political scene altogether, but, rather, will assume a position of authority within those new government structures which are now being considered by the Congress of People's Deputies. I cannot as yet tell you who the new Foreign Minister will be. Haven't decided myself yet. But of one thing you can be absolutely firmly assured—our policy course, the new thinking policy course toward strengthening trust and cooperation between the leadership of both our countries shall remain unchanged in terms of substance as in form. This goes for our bilateral relations. This goes for the European process. This goes for all the arms control and security issues. This goes for the Persian Gulf and all other things on which you and I have both understanding and agreement. Everything stands unchanged. I would have no objection, if you thought you could tell Jim about my letter. Give him my kindest regards.

Taking this opportunity, I am sending you and all your wonderful family my sincere greetings for the New Year and, as I think I can now also add, Christmas greetings. I hope we shall exchange our televised New Year messages to each other's people.

All the scheduling concerning preparations for our meeting in Moscow remains without change. I will be happy to give you here a friendly welcome.

Sincerely yours,
M.GORBACHEV

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library.]

Document No. 119: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush-Gorbachev, 8:02 a.m. – 8:25 a.m.

January 11, 1991

Gorbachev initiates this call to bring Bush up to date on events in Moscow, including recent budget discussions in the Supreme Soviet that resulted in 20 percent overall cuts and a major reduction in military spending. His real priorities, however, are Lithuania and the U.N. Security Council deadline of January 15 for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Bush implores Gorbachev not to use force against nationalist movements in the republics and Gorbachev agrees, but adds, “we only intervene when the situations threaten the lives of people.” His careful words indicate that the possibility of violence is being discussed within the Soviet leadership where Gorbachev is under pressure to introduce presidential rule to crack down on opposition. Just two days later Lithuania would erupt as troops fired on demonstrators, killing 15 people. Turning to the Persian Gulf, Gorbachev—perhaps paradoxically—is still attempting to forestall the impending use of force. He offers to send another personal envoy to Saddam Hussein after clearing specific ideas with Bush. The latter agrees to meet with Alexander Bessmertnykh, about to replace Shevardnadze as foreign minister, to hear the Soviets’ proposals, but he is “not optimistic about avoiding the use of force.” Bush remains firm regarding the January 15 deadline and fears that Saddam will use discussions with a Soviet envoy to circumvent the date.

The President: How are you sir?

President Gorbachev: Hello George. I wanted to call. I think that all of us are very busy.

The President: Very, very. How are things there? We’ve been very busy with the Gulf.

President Gorbachev: Well, things are moving now and we finally have a budget. We had to work hard to get an economic agreement with all the republics, but we have finally done it.

The President: That’s good.

President Gorbachev: In the process of adopting the budget, we adopted cuts of approximately 20%. The Supreme Soviet has reduced the military budget by 20 million rubles, so I can report that we are disarming.

The President: Very interesting.

President Gorbachev: We have been working hard to analyze critically all the parts of the budget, and I myself worked very hard on it for a month. We have done a lot of work. In addition, in our movement to a market economy in order to maintain economic links with the various republics we have completed the process for the required agreements on food supply and economics.

Tomorrow I will chair a meeting of the Council of the Federation. We will begin to discuss candidates for the Prime Minister and his deputies and also take further steps to work on the Union Treaty.

We have some problems in the Baltics, particularly in Lithuania, and also in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which you know. We are doing all that is possible to avoid sharp turns and radical steps, but it is a difficult situation.

But now, bearing in mind that we are on an open line, I want to make a proposal about the Persian Gulf. But first maybe you would like to say something.

The President: I am so hopeful that you can avoid the use of force. You know our position on that; we've talked about it many times. Your relations with all of the outside world would be better if you can avoid the use of force—I think you know this.

President Gorbachev: George, this is what we've been trying to do. We only intervene when the situation threatens the lives of the people. Now I and also the Supreme Soviet are under a lot of pressure. People are demanding I introduce Presidential rule. So far I have been trying to avoid that. Well, let me say that frankly the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania and especially Mr. Landsbergis seem not capable of any movement. Also, I sent a letter to the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet asking them to restore constitutional law. Lithuania has taken no action so far. Today the news is quite bad. There are demonstrations and strikes. You know what my style is in such matters, it is much like your style. I will do all I can to take such steps to reach a political solution.

The President: I appreciate that. We look at it through the different eyes of history, but I appreciate your trying to explain it to me now.

President Gorbachev: Well, we will be acting in a very responsible manner. But it is not all within our control. Today there was even some shooting.

The President: Oh my God.

President Gorbachev: Let me say that I will do my best in order that extremes are avoided in this situation. But only then will I take such steps.

The President: What are your thoughts on the Gulf, Mikhail?

President Gorbachev: George, I wanted to ask you something. In Hussein's letter to me, in answer to one I sent to him, I felt that he is ready to listen to Moscow. He asks for my advice. If I do something in this regard, I want to do it in close coordination with you. I know Shevardnadze is in close touch with Jim Baker. So if you do not object, I could take a step, I could send a personal envoy with some ideas. If you think this is a useful thing to do, I could send someone. Or I could send Mr. Bessmertnykh to talk to you in private to tell you my ideas.

The President: My reservations are about the date January 15. I talked to de Cuellar, and impressed on him that it would be bad if Saddam Hussein could delay a final decision past January 15. The 15th is a real date, and I think that he'll try hard to talk to get past that date. What concerns me about a personal envoy is the timing rather than the substance.

President Gorbachev: George, maybe we'll do this. You'll have a look at those ideas. Bessmertnykh could tell them to you today, and if you agree with them, I could send an envoy tonight.

The President: Well, that's wonderful. We'll see him today, we'll wait for him to call or we'll call him, whatever you think best.

President Gorbachev: Okay, well after that if we agree, we'll decide on timing.

The President: Thank you. We'll wait for Bessmertnykh and get back in touch with you. Thank you for this cooperation.

Mikhail, one other thing, I am not optimistic about avoiding the use of force. I have been optimistic, but not after the de Cuellar mission. In any event we should all be looking for ways to peace. I will be delighted to talk to Bessmertnykh, and I will look at those ideas, but that's my assessment.

President Gorbachev: George, we will work together. Looking at the whole spectrum, I am against working in an uncoordinated way. We will use very strong language with Saddam Hussein. We must stay optimistic. The United States and the USSR can do many good things together.

The President: Well, we'll look forward to talking with Mr. Bessmertnykh. But we can't let him stand up to the opinion of the rest of the world.

President Gorbachev: I agree.

The President: Thanks so much for calling. I look forward to seeing your ambassador. Good night.

President Gorbachev: Thank you. Good bye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2004-1937-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 120: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 9:23 a.m. – 10:34 a.m.

January 18, 1991

Gorbachev calls Bush a day after the United States launches Operation Desert Storm, starting with a massive aerial bombardment campaign against Iraq. Hours before the call, Iraq attacked Israel with Scud missiles, raising the prospect of direct Israeli involvement in the conflict. At the start of the conversation, Gorbachev fully agrees with the necessity of using force against Saddam Hussein and reaffirms his commitment to Iraq's compliance with all U.N. resolutions. However, Gorbachev is very concerned about the loss of life, especially civilians, if the bombing continues. He believes that Saddam is already weakened enough that he would not represent a threat to the region and that now is the time to pause the bombing and allow Iraq an opportunity to withdraw from Kuwait. Gorbachev has asked his ambassador to Iraq to make the following offer to Saddam Hussein: if he agrees to withdraw all troops from Kuwait, there will be a pause to allow him to do so. Gorbachev believes that in that situation he and Bush would be able to "continue U.N. Security Council cooperation and new security structures in the Middle East." Bush is highly skeptical about a bombing halt now, believing it would weaken coalition resolve and leave Iraq with a partial victory, especially after the strikes on Israel the previous day. He tells the Soviet leader the move "may be premature" and would even "put an end to the new world order you and I want."

Referring to the Baltics, where Soviet paratroopers cracked down on nationalist protests on January 12 and 13, Bush, rather than trying to put pressure on Gorbachev, says, "I really empathize with you this week. ... We are so hopeful the Baltic situation can be resolved peacefully."

The President: Mikhail, how are you?

President Gorbachev: George, good afternoon and greetings. This is not a simple time for both of us.

The President: No, it is not. It is a very complicated time.

President Gorbachev: Yes, indeed. It is almost the end of the day in Moscow and getting dark. It is morning in Washington.

The President: Yes. It is 9:20 a.m. in the morning.

President Gorbachev: Well, I would, of course, like to engage first in a discussion of the Persian Gulf situation.

The President: I would be glad to fill you in from our end. I also welcome any thoughts from yours.

President Gorbachev: First of all, I would like to say that our doubts, yours and mine, about Saddam Hussein have proven right. He is the kind of person against whom force is necessary. I have a full understanding of this burden to the nations of the world. Now, casualties have occurred and the situation is developing. We have to think about what to do next.

The President: That is true. I hope we can all agree on full compliance with the U.N. resolutions.

President Gorbachev: In my statement, I reaffirmed our position of principle. I said Saddam Hussein was to blame, and that war had become inevitable. I said it would be necessary for Iraq to leave Kuwait and comply with the U.N. resolutions.

The President: I thought it was an outstanding statement.

President Gorbachev: Now that war is beginning, our number one priority should be to shorten it and make sure it does not spread.

The President: I worry about that, too. When Saddam Hussein fired the missiles on Israel, he was trying from his side to make the war spread.

President Gorbachev: Yes, and I think your position is good. Your advice to the Israelis was timely, appropriate and right.

The President: We are trying to figure out what they might do. I hope it does not encourage the war to spread and draw others into it.

President Gorbachev: Yes, indeed. I think this is precisely what Saddam Hussein wants to see.

The President: We are worried about the Jordan equation, Mikhail. I want to know what you think about that.

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, let me first share with you my thinking on further steps.

The President: Please. I'd be delighted to hear them.

President Gorbachev: First of all. Two days of powerful military action have moved the situation to a new phase. Saddam Hussein before that showed ambitious and threatening behavior and contempt for the U.S., U.N. and the USSR. Now we can speak of his political defeat. This is my first point.

The second point is that with the enormous damage done, the irreparable damage to the military and industrial potential of Iraq, now we have a different Iraq. Any ambition to dictate its will in the region has no material basis. And I believe that an important victory has been achieved. That is a victory that is important for you domestically and important for the world. The aggressor has been taught a lesson.

And I think that now, George, think about this. What is the purpose of continuing military action? The cost of bombing and air missions and participation of the land forces would mean many more casualties among the American forces and victims among the civilians in Iraq. I understand you don't want that, not only among American troops, but it would mean a major loss of life among civilians.

The President: Exactly. I feel strongly about that.

President Gorbachev: This is a very important statement. So now what can we have if the strikes continue, strikes against people. This military action could change the character of the war. And I don't underrate Saddam Hussein. He may still have some land military capability.

Based on all this today, in the middle of the day, I instructed my Ambassador in Baghdad to get in touch with Saddam Hussein and to ask him a question. My

question is: if there is a pause in the full development of the military option, would he be able to state he would leave Kuwait. I asked for an urgent answer. In the meantime, I wanted to inform you about that contact.

And my question to you is: if he agrees, although it is difficult to suppose he will do that, would you be ready to pause in the military option. And if Saddam Hussein rejects this proposal, I'll publicly speak about this. People have to know with whom they are dealing.

And I also know you are worried about the possibility if Saddam Hussein leaves Kuwait peacefully, that he will have a tremendous military potential to destabilize the Middle East. But that has been taken care of. And in that new situation, we could continue U.N. Security Council cooperation and new security structures in the Middle East. This is what I was going to say.

The President: Let me respond in some detail. In the first place, we have no evidence that he'll accept this offer of yours. Secondly, the concept that the military superiority that has given him arrogance in the Middle East has been resolved is not correct. A lot of his military power is still intact. He could continue to dominate his neighbors.

What we would have to consider carefully at any time in the cessation of hostilities is the following: would the cessation of hostilities make a hero of him in the Middle East? At this juncture, his having attacked Israel and the continued use of the SCUDS and the Republican Guards make me feel he could claim victory out of the rubble of defeat.

There is another point that would concern me. The coalition forces at this juncture are highly motivated, including the Arab participants. They would feel a cessation now would clearly be a victory for Saddam Hussein. It would put them in an extraordinarily weakened position in my view. They would see this as the one thing we said we wouldn't do—compromise. They would see Saddam Hussein, though weakened, with a military still intact, his ground forces in particular.

So I think this effort may be premature. But, Mikhail, let me add a personal note. I continually worry about the loss of life you talked about in your message today. But we have been so far very lucky in that category. By that I mean we are targeting carefully and going the extra mile to protect against the very attack he launched on Israel yesterday. The targeting specifically excludes religious sites, mosques and damage to hospitals, schools and population centers. It has been precise and our analysis so far is that we've been successful in that regard.

But, so nobody likes this. There is no joy in what is happening at all. I think we're now in a position to solve this problem.

But I must say I really feel we have got to stay the course until it is abundantly clear that he will unilaterally and without concessions or conciliation leave Kuwait.

I would be interested in what your Ambassador learns. I hate to hold out hope to Saddam Hussein and would not want to hold out hope that talks or negotiations about this would satisfy the coalition. And what he did yesterday in attacking Israel with city-busting weapons, that complicates things. If the fighting

stopped this minute, he would say the attack on Israel brought the war to an end and made him victorious. That would put an end to the new world order you and I want. He would march out and say that striking Israel had brought the war to an end. Instead of being the humiliated braggart, he would be the victor, and others would see that. I am thinking of Egypt when I say that.

That is my thinking. I think it accurately reflects the thinking of the coalition partners, but I haven't talked to them about what you have mentioned to me, obviously. I think the other coalition partners would agree with what I've told you here today.

None of us want to see a vacuum in Iraq, an Iraq so weak and impotent that it would be destabilizing. So weak that it would be subject to aggression from its neighbors. We don't want to see that and we would work with you and others to stop that. In other words, we don't want to wipe out Iraq. So I would—

President Gorbachev: If you are through then a few words from me.

The President: I welcome your thoughtfulness and your concerns. I encourage you to stay in touch. I thought you were entitled to a frank assessment of the situation. Please go ahead.

President Gorbachev: First of all, I would repeat. We will be with you to the very end, committed to the end. We will maintain the same position on the Saddam Hussein regime. The fact that hostilities have begun, the blame is fully with Saddam Hussein.

The difference between us is on the following. You believe Iraq retains a significant military power that could threaten its neighbors, and that it will not comply with the U.N. resolutions. But, please, George, consider the central point I am making in this conversation. The first phase of action against Saddam Hussein was fully justified and has brought practical, strategic results. We, you and I, agree that if Saddam Hussein had left Kuwait a week ago, talks could have begun. But first he had to leave. If he were to leave Kuwait now, he would be weakened, rendered powerless for many years to come. It would be a lesson to everyone.

([Illegible words] minutes later)

The President: Mikhail, we were cut off some time ago.

President Gorbachev: George, I thought communications was our problem, but it seems the U.S. has problems too.

The President: Always, always. We can put a man on the moon but can't talk to Moscow.

President Gorbachev: Still, yours is better than ours.

The President: I'm not so sure about that.

President Gorbachev: What was the last point I was making?

The President: You said we agreed if Saddam left completely, the talks could begin and he would be weakened. That was the last thing I heard.

President Gorbachev: There are two possibilities. One, I assume that the U.N. resolutions are complied with. The other possibility is to use all forces and begin a new phase in hostilities. That means a greater loss of life. We must think of the long-term political consequences. We must think of the loss of opportunity.

So, George, my concern is that we make sure not to lose the opportunity now that we have attained strategic objectives. We have taught a lesson to the aggressor. Our new U.S.-Soviet cooperation, the spirit of our common values, means it is important to do the right thing. Stop in this phase. I am thinking about the casualties of U.S. forces and the loss of life among civilians and Iraqi soldiers.

The President: I understand your concerns and share them. But I worry that if we stop short of full compliance with the U.N. resolutions, this man will pull victory out of the jaws of defeat. That would be a terrible example for the future. I agree with you on bloodshed. But I don't think our objectives have been achieved yet. There is no evidence he will comply with the U.N. resolutions right now. He could do that this very minute if he wanted to.

President Gorbachev: George, well I think there is no difference between you and me on the need for compliance. There is no doubt that is valid and in effect. And there are no cracks, there must be no cracks on this. And at the same time, I think that the President of the U.S. and the President of the USSR must think of how to get out of this situation. This new phase brings me to the conclusion that we can take steps, all of us.

The President: Let's stay in touch. I would be interested in what your Ambassador hears. We cannot end up in negotiations or conciliation. Please think what the attack on Israel last night did to this equation. It's a whole new dimension.

I saw the Soviet statement and thought it was good. Let's think about it. Stay in touch. I agree with you that the Presidents of the U.S. and USSR must find a way to resolve this thing.

One point of possible difference. Maybe you think he has been pounded more than we think. We think he still has a powerful military component in place.

President Gorbachev: George, I think we have had a timely discussion. I hope we'll talk again soon.

The President: I appreciate the call. Let me add in conclusion that I really empathize with you this week. Let me simply reiterate what we said to your very able new Foreign Minister, Mr. Bessmertnykh. We are so hopeful the Baltic situation can be resolved peacefully. It would really complicate things.

We want to clear up CFE and START and go the extra mile on those two. We've not lost interest in either of them.

President Gorbachev: I take note of this very important point. I would like to shake your hand and hope to talk soon.

The President: The phone lines are open. Call day or night. It doesn't matter what time of day it is. Good luck to you on this and all the problems you have at home.

President Gorbachev: Thank you. I shake your hand.

The President: Good-bye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library.]

Document No. 121: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 11:15 a.m. – 11:43 a.m.

February 23, 1991

As the USSR celebrates Soviet Army Day, the United States is poised to begin the ground campaign to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. In this last conversation just before the start of the invasion, Gorbachev still hopes to persuade Bush to delay the invasion, even for 24 to 48 hours, in order to convene the U.N. Security Council and prepare a joint resolution. He informs Bush that Saddam Hussein is now willing to withdraw from Kuwait City within four days. “That is to say, we have a white flag from Saddam Hussein.” But Bush has already given his ultimatum to the Iraqi leader and is not willing to backtrack. Despite Gorbachev’s plea—“George, let’s keep cool”—he explains that he has no flexibility, that the previous U.N. resolutions have been disregarded, and that unless something decisive happens in the next several minutes the ground attack will commence as announced. He praises Gorbachev’s role in attempting to resolve the crisis and appreciates his diplomatic efforts to avoid bloodshed but does not want to give him “a false impression that there is any more time.”

The President: Hello, Mikhail, how are you?

President Gorbachev: Greetings.

The President: Greetings.

President Gorbachev: Fine, George. We have a holiday today. We are waiting for congratulations from the chief of the U.S. armed forces to the chief of the Soviet forces for Red Army Day.

The President: I hope this is in train. Are our greetings on the way?

President Gorbachev: Well, we began the celebration yesterday of the 73rd anniversary of the Soviet army—but the real day is today. People here—some of my assistants were on the front in World War II. Yakovlev and Chernyaev were on the front in the trenches in World War II. They want this working day to end so that they can begin to celebrate.

The President: Please convey my personal congratulations as the Commander in Chief of the American armed forces.

What is the latest in the Middle East?

President Gorbachev: This is precisely what I want to talk about. To continue yesterday’s discussion—after our talk yesterday, something has happened that changed the situation. In Baghdad, an official statement has been issued that agrees to full and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait as specified in the U.N. Resolution and that it will happen from Kuwait City within four days. That is to say, we have a white flag from Saddam Hussein.

Now it is evening here in Moscow. In the afternoon Tariq Aziz had a press conference here in Moscow and set forth that acceptance. Yesterday, after we

talked, I gave the suggestions and thoughts from you that were discussed on the phone to Aziz and also my own view. I think that our very firm position and your severe demands have made possible that statement of acceptance. And now we have a new situation that is new for both of us. And I believe that we must weigh carefully the entire situation and discuss what we must decide to do next.

I understand the meaning of your demands that have their own logic. Let me say that today I talked to the leaders of a number of countries and many of them said that there are no differences in the two sets of demands that are insurmountable. To put it briefly, the fact that we have been together from beginning to end has been of decisive importance in making sure that this new situation has come about. Let me say something else, without what the U.S. has done, there would not have been this kind of change in the Iraqi position. And I asked Mr. Ignatenko, my Press Secretary, to communicate that particular thought to the world press. He has already done that in a press conference.

Let me now complete my thoughts and then I want to listen to you. After we talked yesterday, I have been thinking what should we do now? And how should we act in order to make certain that there are no doubts about our ability further to cooperate? By the way, this is something that I felt in my discussions with other leaders. They all want the same thing. President Mubarak said very frankly and straightforwardly—"to me the most important thing is that the U.S. President and the Soviet Union continue to stand together."

Based on that—I want to propose the following: That at this new stage, we together, the U.S. and Soviet Union, cooperate in the framework of the U.N. Security Council and find a way that would incorporate all the elements of the ideas that we both put forward in a joint resolution. I believe that it is this that would make it possible for our two countries to continue to work together and to attain the desired goal—the desired result. This is all I wanted to say at this point because we had a wide-ranging philosophical discussion yesterday.

The President: Thank you sir. Jim Baker had a good long talk with Bessmertnykh late last night and for you [that] was this morning. I don't believe that Saddam has ever believed me or how strongly the U.S. feels. Yesterday while you were trying to work all this out—their spokesman went out and called me a liar about the burning up of those oil wells. And once again there have been a bunch more oil wells set on fire overnight. They are continuing to use a scorched earth policy and stalling and this has made a profound impact on me and on other coalition partners.

And they want to negotiate back from an existing United Nations mandate. So we put down a time when they could demonstrate good-faith. We are in a difficult position—I can't be seen to be saying something and then not be sincere. I can't say you must move out by noon and—with no movement and continued destruction of the oil fields—do nothing. Particularly, when there are still conditions—you have worked hard—but there are still conditions. And we too have had extensive consultations—before you and I talked—and there is a solid view that he is stalling particularly as it relates to damages and he just wants to do it in a different way.

I do not believe there can be any flexibility in what we can do at this point, even though I know that they are talking in informal conversations in the U.N. Security Council. The best thing, I agree, is for us to be together. I think I have tried, you have tried and Jim and Bessmertnykh have tried. I agree with the premise. You see, we think our position is the United Nations position. So I would again appeal—with respect for your fantastic efforts—that you support the position of the U.N.—unconditional withdrawal—absolutely without conditions. They say its [sic] unconditional and they have dropped some conditions—thanks to your intervention—but there are still conditions. Our countries, those involved, feel that now is the time to come to the full U.N. position—already enshrined in the U.N. resolutions.

Jim tried to make it clear to Bessmertnykh. We cannot put anything on hold—I have been out there and others have strongly supported that position. I can understand that Iraq doesn't want to accept the conditions but I can't wait. I don't think we should give the Iraqis any other choice but the instant acceptance of these conditions immediately.

That is where we are and I think the difference we have is that you think they have agreed to unconditional withdrawal and we and others with us do not agree. Let's not let this divide the U.S. and the Soviet Union. There are things far bigger than this conflagration which is going to be over very soon.

President Gorbachev: George, let's keep cool. Although, of course, all of us are human beings, I think both of us understand that what we need is not Saddam Hussein—his fate has been determined. Our concern is to take advantage of the opportunity before us in order to obtain the goal we set together within the framework together [sic] in the U.N. Security Council and also to prevent a tragic phase in the further development of the conflict.

Saddam Hussein wants to stall but we are not simpletons. Without wasting time, within 24–48 hours we should raise this in the U.N. Security Council and have a very tough discussion and consider this there. I would accept your idea that within this general understanding we have between us—Baker and Bessmertnykh should work out the details and we would be able to get it done. I want in particular to be understood by you that what I am saying are the words of a friend in the spirit of cooperation. And I fully share what you have just said that there will be many questions to work out. So, George, let me shake your hand and let me say good-bye in a spirit of full understanding.

The President: Mikhail, I appreciate that spirit but I don't want to leave a false impression that there is any more time. Of course I will ask Jim to talk about this but I do not want you to feel that there is any inclination for the U.S. and the coalition to delay. I will talk to Jim about he and Bessmertnykh. You have mentioned the human life aspect about which we talked yesterday and I agree. But I do think this man is stalling and what he is doing to the oil wells in Kuwait and the people there argues against any reasonableness on his part. I don't want to mislead you. I don't feel inclined to wait. I will talk to Jim but don't want to leave the impression that I can delay. We will see what we can do but unless

there is something in the next few minutes that he does what has been demanded of him by the coalition under the U.N. mandate and resolutions.

I will talk to Jim. But thank you very much.

President Gorbachev: Good. I understand what you have just said but I think with all we have been through—one or two days may not be decisive in one sense but in another they could be very decisive and we can do what is right.

The President: Thanks.

President Gorbachev: Thanks.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library.]

Chapter 9

THE MOSCOW SUMMIT, 1991

The July 1991 superpower encounter in Moscow was the last full superpower summit between the United States and the Soviet Union. Its main formal achievement was the long-awaited signing of the START Treaty, which Ronald Reagan had hoped to sign with Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988. It was the completion of old business rather than the breaking of new ground. The most memorable and consequential part of the summit was the almost five-hour talk between Gorbachev and Bush at Novo-Ogarevo, a presidential retreat and dacha on Moscow's outskirts, on July 31, where the new spirit of partnership permeated every item on the agenda—from Soviet internal problems to regional issues around the globe. The U.S.-Soviet partnership was what Gorbachev was relying on at this moment in his effort to rescue *perestroika* and preserve the USSR as a state and as a global power committed to new thinking. To the Soviet leader, the Novo-Ogarevo conversation in particular meant that his new thinking was becoming the new paradigm of international relations.

However, the Moscow summit came after the London economic meeting of the G-7 where Gorbachev had arrived with an appeal to the international community for financial aid to the struggling Soviet economy, but returned home with nothing in terms of real commitments. Internal problems—the failing economy and nationalism, which were breaking the country apart—were the main Soviet priorities. The meeting with Bush provided the Soviet leader with a partial reprieve from the depressing domestic scene—a forum where he could talk and act like a global leader and see real results from his innovative approach. Gorbachev called the Moscow summit in his memoir a “stellar hour for the new thinking and foreign policy originating from it.”¹ The U.S. side did not see it as significant at all. Raymond Garthoff described the meeting as “transitional” in the context of the changes taking place in the world.²

For Bush, the year 1991 saw an unprecedented jump in his approval ratings after the decisive military victory in the Persian Gulf—89 percent support in February—then a slow and steady decline throughout the year, dipping to an abysmal 29 percent in July 1992.³ After Desert Storm, the president had to shift his focus from foreign policy, where he was most comfortable and successful, to domestic issues, where he was forced to face early signs of a recession in the

¹ Gorbachev, *Zhizn I reformy*, p. 307.

² Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 465.

³ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116677/presidential-approval-ratings-gallup-historical-statistics-trends.aspx>.

U.S. economy, which put severe constraints on his ability to contribute to Soviet reform in a meaningful way. This general withdrawal of the American electorate from foreign affairs and especially its unwillingness even to consider significant foreign aid, found its expression in the startling result of a special Senate election in Pennsylvania. Harris Wofford, a Democrat, who had concentrated heavily on the recession and domestic issues, beat Bush's attorney general, Richard Thornburgh. The dynamics were succinctly captured by a GOP county commissioner: "When the year first started, center stage was the wonderful victory in the Middle East. But by the year's end, that's a faded memory, all we have is the economy. ... A lot of voters are saying, 'We don't like your economy, Mr. President,' and Dick Thornburgh is our vehicle."⁴

In U.S.-Soviet relations, the year began with the conflict in the Persian Gulf where Saddam Hussein had refused to withdraw his troops from Kuwait in defiance of several U.N. Security Council resolutions. Gorbachev manipulated all his skills and levers, including sending the old Arabist Yevgeny Primakov to Iraq and to the United States to try to forestall the use of military force against Iraq. However, Saddam's half-hearted concessions were insufficient, and the United States took charge of an international coalition in an aerial and ground war that drove Saddam out of Kuwait, but did not pursue him to Baghdad. By early March, the main fighting was over. The American military option had worked, and Gorbachev was left feeling that his choice (diplomatic pressure) had not been given enough time to bear fruit.⁵

In the USSR, January 1991 erupted with major nationalist tensions in the Baltics, which led to the use of force by federal units in Vilnius and Riga. It was not clear immediately if Gorbachev had given the orders or even how informed he was about the developments. The Baltic crisis seriously strained his relationship with Bush, making the U.S. president vulnerable to his own right wing because of his support for Gorbachev. Still, the administration handled the crisis constructively—making strong statements but not allowing it to spill over to other aspects of the relationship, and, most importantly, not throwing itself uncritically behind nationalist demands for full sovereignty and thus a breakup of the Soviet state. In early May, when Bush met with leaders of the three Baltic states, he encouraged them to negotiate with the Kremlin and spoke about his cooperation with Gorbachev.⁶ Bush's diary notes show how sensitive the Baltics issue was for him and how he tried to adhere to a balanced position.⁷ However, because of developments there, the fighting in the Middle East, and foot-dragging on the last details

⁴ Katharine Seelye, "Wofford Stuns Thornburgh, Sends Message to DC," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 6, 1991.

⁵ Document No. 121.

⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, Bush-Landsbergis-Savisaar-Godmanis, May 8, 1991. Bush Presidential Library.

⁷ George Bush's diary notes, March 17, 1991, Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 501.

of START, the Moscow summit, originally scheduled for February 1991, had to be postponed until late July.

Like Bush, Gorbachev was finding that domestic problems had to be given priority over foreign policy. His ultimate task was to keep the Soviet Union together in a new, decentralized and more democratic form. On March 17, 1991, the USSR held a national referendum on a new Union. Although six out of 15 republics refused to participate, in the remaining nine the turnout was over 80 percent, and 77 percent of voters expressed their preference for keeping the Union together. Interestingly, 71 percent of Ukrainians (with 83 percent turnout) supported the Union, as did 95 percent of the voters in Kazakhstan (with 88 percent turnout). The results invigorated Gorbachev, who launched a set of negotiations called the “Novo-Ogarevo process”—after the location of the talks. On April 23, the participating republican leaders and Gorbachev signed the “9+1” agreement to prepare the final, new Union Treaty.

The Bush administration was naturally keenly interested in Gorbachev’s political situation and his ability to deliver on his commitments—or even to survive long enough to sign the long-awaited START Treaty. On April 10, David Gompert and Ed Hewitt, who had just replaced Condoleezza Rice on the National Security Council staff, asked the CIA for an analysis of the post-Gorbachev succession—who the main actors would be, and the likely scenarios. The assessment came back on April 29, just as Gorbachev was breathing fresh life into his new Union.

The analysis opened quite drastically: “The Gorbachev era is effectively over.” It was probably the most prescient CIA analysis of the *perestroika* years. The most likely scenario in the report bore an eerie resemblance to the upcoming August coup. The analysts came to the conclusion that Gorbachev was likely to be replaced either by reformers or hard-liners, but more likely the latter. They pointed out that “there is no love between Gorbachev and his current allies and they could well move to try to dump him.” They then listed possible conspirators—Vice President Yanayev, KGB chief Kryuchkov, and Defense Minister Yazov, among others. The report predicted that the “traditionalists” would find a “legal veneer” for removing their erstwhile leader: “most likely they would present Gorbachev with an ultimatum to comply or face arrest or death.” If he agreed, Yanayev would step in as president, then the conspirators would declare a state of emergency and install “some kind of a National Salvation Committee.”⁸ Although the memo concluded that “time is working against the traditionalists,” it probably strengthened the determination of the Bush administration to get its arms control priorities done while Gorbachev was still in power.

⁸ Directorate of Intelligence, “The Gorbachev Succession,” April 29, 1991. George Bush Library, obtained by the National Security Archive through FOIA 99-03030F/2.

After Desert Storm, U.S.-Soviet relations returned to their usual course with a focus on arms control, regional issues, and the challenges of Soviet domestic reform, which took on larger and larger importance as the year progressed. Bush felt confident after Gorbachev's letter of January 28 that the crackdown in Vilnius and Riga would not lead to more aggressive actions by the center, such as the introduction of a state of emergency or direct presidential rule. When Baker came to Moscow on March 14–17, his main tasks were to review START, discrepancies on CFE, regional issues, especially the Middle East after the Gulf War, and Soviet internal developments. In his meeting with Gorbachev on March 15, Baker also directly addressed the issue of biological weapons, which the Bush administration chose to tackle in a confidential way, without public exposure.⁹

On START, there were only three remaining issues: the encryption of missile telemetry, the counting of warheads on MIRVed missiles at a lower number than the maximum of those actually deployed, and the definition of the parameters of "new" missile types.¹⁰ But in fact, the main problem was within the United States, personified by the national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, who was still mistrustful of Soviet intentions and therefore stubbornly unwilling to reach any compromises with Moscow on downloading MIRVed warheads and the possibility of a breakout. As General Colin Powell noted at the time, "I'm not as exercised about it as Brent. ... The situation is changing so fast and so profoundly that someday we'll wonder why we ever argued about this."¹¹ Indeed, they were still arguing over the details of the treaty that Reagan had been prepared to sign back in June 1988.

Baker and Bessmertnykh negotiated over these last obstacles during their meetings in Moscow in mid-March, in Kislovodsk on April 24–25, in Cairo on May 12–13, and finally in Washington on July 11–14. Gorbachev was under severe pressure from his own military not to commit to anything they might see as a concession. To protect himself from this criticism, he brought the military in to participate in all negotiations—and not just the irreplaceable Marshal Akhromeyev but Chief of the General Staff Mikhail Alekseyevich Moiseyev as well. The negotiations dragged on with little progress until the July meeting between Baker and Bessmertnykh, and the last details had to wait until Gorbachev and Bush resolved them directly during their breakfast meeting in London on July 17, just before Gorbachev addressed the G-7 leaders.¹²

On conventional weapons in Europe, the Soviet military was in a state of near rebellion, resorting to every possible loophole to avoid full compliance. They moved a large amount of equipment from Europe to beyond the Urals where it

⁹ Document No. 122.

¹⁰ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 463.

¹¹ Quoted in Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 373.

¹² Document No. 132.

would not be covered by agreements, and insisted on an interpretation of naval coastal defense that would place it outside of the treaty.¹³ Baker raised the issue of violations in his meeting with Gorbachev in March, and subsequently in every conversation with Bessmertnykh. Using the implicit linkage between compliance on CFE and the signing of START, Gorbachev was able to convince the military to accept additional obligations, which helped them to save face, but in fact ensured that the treaty would be implemented within the framework of the original text. General Moiseyev brought a compromise proposal to Washington in May that allowed some progress in the CFE negotiations. Bush also had to push Gorbachev on CFE in a phone call on May 27.¹⁴ Finally, the Soviet side agreed to make a unilateral statement regarding additional obligations outside the treaty, on June 14 in Vienna.¹⁵ The CFE accord, which had been negotiated on the assumption that the Warsaw Pact was the main concern, lost much of its core significance on July 1 when the Warsaw Treaty Organization was dissolved by its members.

Still, one issue on the arms control agenda remained unresolved—even during the subsequent U.S.-Russian relationship: the Soviet military biological weapons program. Not much had changed in the Soviet response since Baker had presented the U.S. papers in March. On May 11, Bessmertnykh produced a formal reply to U.S. concerns, which the Americans concluded contained a “cover-up on every point.”¹⁶ The administration knew it would have to brief Congress on the issue before the summit. Therefore, the U.S. side decided to raise it one more time at a personal meeting between the two heads of state before the Moscow summit. On June 19, Bush sent a very direct letter to Gorbachev informing him that “the congressional leadership has now been briefed,” and demanding full transparency on the issue, warning that there was a chance “the Senate will not ratify either treaty unless and until the Soviet Union begins to dismantle its biological weapons program.” Gorbachev in response requested a full study from the Defense Ministry and charged his trusted military adviser, Akhromeyev, to provide a final report to him personally. The long and winding report arrived on July 13, and while it acknowledged a military biological program prior to 1986, it basically denied the USSR was presently in violation of the 1972 convention, pointed to the vagueness of the convention itself, and stated that mutual inspections were needed if U.S. concerns were to be met.¹⁷

Akhromeyev’s report and the official papers prepared by the Defense Ministry allowed Gorbachev to continue to deny the existence of the program when Bush raised it in their private meeting after lunch and before the opening of the G-7.

¹³ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest levels*, pp. 288–290 and 363–369.

¹⁴ Document No. 126.

¹⁵ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 462.

¹⁶ Hoffman, *The Dead Hand*, p. 361.

¹⁷ Marshal Akhromeyev Memorandum to Gorbachev on Biological Weapons, July 13, 1991. Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 2, Opis 2.

The record of this part of the meeting is still classified in both the U.S. archives and at the Gorbachev Foundation. The only available account of this “friendly but firm” conversation exists in Chernyaev’s memoir. When Bush pressed Gorbachev to respond to American accusations, the Soviet leader replied, “George, I have figured it out. I can tell you with confidence: we aren’t making biological weapons. ... I asked for a report on this matter. The report is ready, it’s been signed by Minister of Defense Yazov and other people. I told you the essence of this report, its main conclusion. I suggest we finish with this.” Chernyaev believes that the military had been misleading Gorbachev all along, and so after the July 17 conversation with Bush he wrote a memo to his boss asking what exactly he knew about the biological program and whether it was possible he was being deceived.¹⁸ The United States was not willing to let the issue go, but the whirlwind of global events pushed it aside, and later the coup complicated matters even further.

THE LONDON G-7 SUMMIT

In spring 1991 it became painfully clear to both sides that many aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations and certain larger issues of international life in the near future would be determined by the state of Soviet internal affairs. Even though Gorbachev had won his March 17 referendum on the future of the Union, the actual Union Treaty became part of the intense and personal struggle between him and Boris Yeltsin. Now, after his tactical shift to the right in late fall 1990, which did not yield much success, Gorbachev tried to recreate an alliance with the democratic forces in both the center and the republics. He even tried to engage Yeltsin, whom he needed most of all in the process of creating the new Union. At the same time, the conservatives Gorbachev had brought to power earlier—Boris Pugo, Kryuchkov, and Yazov—still occupied key positions in the government. They openly criticized the embattled leader for the failure of his domestic reforms and for selling out to the West in foreign policy. The premonition of a coup d’état hung in the air as the country sank deeper and deeper into economic crisis. In one more analysis, entitled *The Soviet Cauldron*, the CIA’s SOVA office produced another scenario of a putsch in which hardliners would come to power by handicapping or detaining Gorbachev and using emergency powers to sideline if not murder other democratic leaders. The paper also predicted an easy victory for Yeltsin in the Russian presidential election scheduled for June 12.¹⁹

In this situation, Gorbachev placed his hopes in obtaining economic assistance from the West to jump-start his economic reform and feed a population weary of empty shelves and promises. On May 23, Gorbachev made a public plea for financial aid, seeking \$100 billion. Many in Russia quietly hoped for

¹⁸ Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, p. 358.

¹⁹ CIA, Office of Soviet Analysis, “The Soviet Cauldron,” April 1991.

a “Marshal Plan” from the West at the upcoming London summit. Former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, visiting Washington as a private citizen in early May, encouraged his American counterparts to help Gorbachev, emphasizing how crucial the next months would be and how essential agricultural credits would be to staving off the crisis. He declared, “the American public cannot seem neutral to events in the Soviet Union.”²⁰

The thinking in Washington could not have been more different. Bush’s economic team was deeply uncertain about the direction of the Soviet economic reform and unwilling to make financial commitments on political grounds. The magnitude and significance of the Soviet transformation seems to have been widely underappreciated. As Beschloss and Talbott note, Bush complained to his advisers about Gorbachev’s repeated pleas of support: “The guy doesn’t seem to get it. He seems to think that we owe him economic help because we support him politically. We’ve got to give him a lesson in basic economics. Business is business. Loans have to be made for sound financial and commercial reasons.”²¹ Bush understood, of course, that “sound financial reasons” would not appear in the Soviet Union any time soon, but he was well aware of domestic political realities and the elections upcoming in 1992.

One of Gorbachev’s priorities was to obtain agricultural loans from the United States. He made an urgent plea to Bush to provide \$1.5 billion in loans in his letter of March 20. In response, Bush sent a small delegation including his senior adviser on Russian and Eurasian affairs, Ed Hewett, Undersecretary of Agriculture Richard Crowder, and Assistant Secretary of State Eugene McAllister to study the system of food supply in the Soviet Union, which was in a particularly severe crisis. After a long meeting with Gorbachev on May 25, Hewett wrote a memo to Bush emphasizing the need to provide “not only supportive words, but material support” for Gorbachev, and pointing to the fact that every time the Soviets fulfilled requirements set by the United States, they found themselves faced with new conditions.²² The memorandum made an impact. In his June 10 letter, Bush finally responded to Gorbachev’s request and granted \$1.5 billion in three tranches. The letter included more conditions—the aid had to be fairly distributed among the republics, and assurances given to the U.S. side of a firm commitment to market reforms in the Soviet food distribution system, which the U.S. Agricultural Mission in May had found to be the most problematic link in the country’s food supply system.²³

On May 20, the Supreme Soviet passed laws on free travel and emigration in hopes of breaking the impasse with Washington over the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. In April and May, Grigory Yavlinsky, an author of the Five Hundred Days

²⁰ Document No. 123.

²¹ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 378.

²² Hewett Memorandum, Document No. 125.

²³ Bush Letter to Gorbachev, June 10, 1991, Bush Library, National Security Archive FOIA 99-0303-F/1.

Plan who now was working with Graham Allison of Harvard on a proposal for economic reform aptly named the Grand Bargain, tried to persuade Gorbachev to make an appeal for financial aid at the meeting of the G-7 in London. Margaret Thatcher supported the idea. When Thatcher came to Moscow in the end of May, Gorbachev practically rehearsed his speech to the G-7 with his trusted partner, although she was no longer prime minister. Thatcher suggested that he not agree to associate status for the Soviet Union in international financial institutions and that the Soviets pass appropriate laws regulating free market economic activities before appealing for new loans.²⁴ While in Moscow, she invited Matlock to the British ambassador's residence and asked him to deliver a message to "my friend George" that he needed to invite Gorbachev to the G-7 and "lead the effort just as he did with Kuwait," to provide a substantial package of Western aid.²⁵

In Washington, the administration faced the same quandary of wanting Gorbachev to succeed yet not wanting to waste money on an uncertain outcome in an unfriendly domestic setting. At the same time, Bush knew that the West Europeans believed the West, including the United States, should prepare a significant financial aid package in order not to let Soviet reforms fail. Kohl and Mitterrand were especially vocal in this regard. Bush did not want to look stingy in front of the allies, and sought a solution. On June 21, he convened his top advisers to discuss "Soviet economic issues and the London economic summit." In his preparatory memo to the president, Scowcroft outlined two main issues for the meeting—how to announce a limited package of trade and technical assistance and "whether or not we should be prepared with a more ambitious response to Gorbachev in London." Scowcroft's concern in the memo was that Kohl "may well push for substantial financial aid with no political or economic conditionality, and the French and Italians would likely follow the German lead." For Scowcroft, such aid would result in "wasted resources and do nothing to encourage the transition to a market economy." The meeting came to the conclusion that the USSR has not yet created the conditions in which such aid could be used efficiently, and that the United States could not afford to provide this kind of aid for domestic political reasons. At the same time, they could not afford looking stingy in the eyes of their allies, so at the G-7 Bush would be rhetorically supportive but discourage others from making major commitments by raising a note of caution. The allies needed to be dissuaded, so Bush called Kohl on June 24 to make sure he did not provide excessive commitments to Gorbachev and to "prevent a summit split on a key issue" in case the American and allied positions clashed.²⁶ Bush also wrote letters to each of the allies explaining his administration's stance and

²⁴ Memorandum of conversation between Gorbachev and Thatcher, May 27, 1991, Moscow, Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opus 1.

²⁵ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 537–538.

²⁶ Memorandum for the President from Brent Scowcroft, "Meeting on Soviet Economic Issues and the London Economic Summit," June 20, 1991. Bush Library, National Security Archive FOIA 2000-1933-F.

cautioning against providing financial aid to the Soviets before they committed to serious market reform.

In his memoir, Gorbachev described preparations for his presentation at the G-7 as a comprehensive process that included internal discussions and analysis of dozens of proposals and scenarios for economic reform. One of the most attractive plans was the Grand Bargain prepared jointly by Yavlinsky and Allison. Gorbachev asked Yavlinsky to accompany him to London in part to show his seriousness about reform, but Yavlinsky declined. On July 11 the Soviet leader sent a personal message to G-7 leaders, attaching plans for economic reform approved by the Novo-Ogarevo group of republic leaders who were willing to form a new Union. Bush was still not convinced that Gorbachev should be invited to the meeting. (Gorbachev noted that even after all the leaders supported the idea of inviting him, the United States had reservations.) The Soviet leader described a letter he received from Bush right before the meeting as having a “heavy sub-text and even elements of pressure.”²⁷

The Bush administration remained cool on the subject of aid but also aware that other leaders were more willing to help Gorbachev. Kohl and Mitterrand encouraged Bush to be more decisive in offering real support. However, even after Gorbachev’s appeal to global leaders in his letter, there was no consensus on aid.

On July 17, the Soviet and American leaders met early in the morning, before Gorbachev’s scheduled presentation to the G-7, and wrapped up the remaining START issues. Bush described it as a “momentous and exhilarating moment” because a historic arms control agreement had finally been reached,²⁸ but it was not enough for Gorbachev, who had made last-minute concessions on START precisely in hopes of gaining U.S. economic support.

Gorbachev’s performance on July 17 was passionate, reflecting his need for something tangible to show the population back home that he could still deliver on his economic promise. He committed himself to comprehensive market reform and democratization, and promised a new Union with a decentralized power structure, but also a single convertible currency and a federal tax system. He made a strong plea for joining international financial institutions as the fastest way to integrate the USSR into the world economy: “What we need now is a new measure of trust. We want to move into the international economic arena. If we’re not admitted into the IMF, the World Bank, GATT and the EBRD, it won’t work. We need them to provide oxygen to breathe.”²⁹

What he did not see was how inconsistent and ambivalent Prime Minister Pavlov’s “anti-crisis” reform plan looked to the West, and how its adoption actually diminished any desire on the American side to commit to aid. What the plan called a “single economic space” for the Soviet republics looked to the Bush

²⁷ Gorbachev, *Ponyat’ perestroiku*, p. 320.

²⁸ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 508.

²⁹ Document No. 133.

administration like a “single economic disaster zone.”³⁰ The Grand Bargain proposed by Yavlinsky and Allison did not have solid political backing in Moscow and therefore was rejected in Washington, too (though mainly because it would require large-scale U.S. financial assistance). However positive the verbal reaction of world leaders, none of them made a commitment to direct economic aid outside of “technical assistance” and offering associate status at the IMF, along with general words of support for *perestroika*. Gorbachev thus came home empty-handed. On the other hand, Bush’s gambit worked—the United States did not look like an outlier in refusing to lead the effort to boost Soviet reform.

THE MOSCOW SUMMIT

After the last START issues were resolved in London, the Moscow meeting became more of a ceremonial occasion for Bush and his team than a working summit. It remained important for Gorbachev to show his countrymen that the international partnership was still working and bringing domestic benefits, although the main reductions in military expenditures were coming from the CFE and not from START. The meeting also came at a crucial moment in his fight for a new Union Treaty, when his alliance with the reformers was making tentative progress. Plus, even though *perestroika* was in crisis at home, Gorbachev believed new thinking was transforming international relations on the basis of principles he personally championed—the non-use of force and universal human values. The biggest domestic benefit would come from the integration of the new USSR into Europe and more generally into the system of international financial institutions.

Gorbachev was in a hurry. At 3 a.m. the night before Bush arrived in Moscow, he concluded a long meeting in Novo-Ogarevo with Yeltsin and Nazarbayev—presidents of the two most important republics. They were now committed to the new Union Treaty, and scheduled the signing for August 20. That day was supposed to be the beginning of a new era of political and economic reform. During the meeting, the trio also decided that after signing the treaty several of the key conservatives would be removed from their posts, naming specifically Kryuchkov, Yazov and Pugo—all future members of the coup. Unbeknownst to Gorbachev, the KGB had bugged the meeting room on Kryuchkov’s orders.³¹ This information undoubtedly contributed to the sense of urgency on the plotters’ part.

The first session of the Moscow summit did not even touch on the subject of arms control. Gorbachev, even though politically weakened by the crises at home, was eager to engage the Americans and move fast to deepen reforms domestically and internationally. Bush was impressed by his energy and wrote in his diary, “Gorbachev was marvelous, and how he could stand up to all the

³⁰ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 388.

³¹ Gorbachev, *Ponyat’ perestroiku*, p. 327.

pressures against him I simply did not know.”³² When the two met alone, on the morning of July 30, the Soviet leader pressed for aid and the removal of barriers for cooperative ventures, specifically complaining about COCOM restrictions. Gorbachev said he was “counting on U.S. assistance” at a “crucial moment” in terms of food supplies, medicines and consumer goods. He also asked for assistance in getting the IMF loans that would support price liberalization and the convertibility of the ruble.³³

Bush again refrained from any commitments but used the Chevron case (the company was seeking preferential terms for its investment in Kazakhstan, but local experts and government would not agree to them) to highlight difficulties that American companies were experiencing when doing business in the USSR. For his part, the president was interested in the progress of the new Union Treaty, making it clear to Gorbachev that the United States was not trying to undermine the process, and that the administration was firmly behind him and not the secessionist republics. Bush even said it would have been fine with him to go to Leningrad instead of Kiev; he “just wanted very much to visit one of your cities.” He emphasized that he rejected Landsbergis’s invitation to Vilnius during the summit. Speaking about the coming U.S. elections, Bush said he was “afraid of 1992,” and that his Soviet policy, and closeness with Gorbachev in particular, were being criticized by both conservatives like Jesse Helms and by the “crazy liberals who want to teach you [Gorbachev] about human rights.”³⁴

The expanded bilateral session that followed the one-on-one meeting was supposed to include presidents Yeltsin and Nazarbayev. Gorbachev had intended this to be a rather ceremonial event designed to showcase the unity and cooperation he had achieved with republican leaders. But at the last moment, Yeltsin, who by now had been elected president of the Russian Federation and had already been received by Bush at the White House in June, refused to attend the luncheon and instead requested a separate meeting with the U.S. president.³⁵ Both meetings—with Nazarbayev and the separate session with Yeltsin—concentrated on issues of economic cooperation with those republics. However, Bush felt that Yeltsin was trying to use the meeting in his political game against Gorbachev. He complained to Scowcroft he had been “ambushed” by the Russian leader.³⁶

On July 31 the motorcade took Bush and his team to meet with Gorbachev in Novo-Ogarevo, a more relaxed setting than the capital. Both wore casual clothes, with Gorbachev dressed all in gray—shirt, sweater and slacks—and Bush sporting a polo shirt. They sat outside on wicker chairs accompanied only by Chernyaev, Bessmertnykh, Baker, Scowcroft, and long-time interpreter Pavel

³² Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 511.

³³ Document No. 135.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, p. 456.

³⁶ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 413.

Palazhchenko.³⁷ The minutes of this five-hour conversation read like a novel—a discussion of a blueprint for a new Soviet Union and a new system of international relations based on an innovative concept of security.

Gorbachev initiated the discussion on international issues, raising the idea of a non-military concept of strategic stability, the integration of Europe on the basis of the CSCE process (including the USSR and Eastern Europe), and the need for cooperation in Africa. He assured Bush that he was not going to play the “China card” and that the Soviets were interested in the normalization of U.S. relations with China. Both leaders found common ground in their cautious and surprisingly non-judgmental reactions to the Tiananmen Square repression by Chinese authorities in early June 1989. Gorbachev also spoke about Japan and ASEAN, environmental degradation and the demographic crisis. He saw the need for great power cooperation in every sphere. He was especially proud of the progress the Soviet Union and the United States had achieved working together on removing the Cold War dynamic from regional conflicts. He believed that jointly they could help launch a national reconciliation process in every regional conflict by encouraging their respective allies to cooperate with each other.

Bush agreed “in principle” with the need to cooperate on regional crises as they had done in Southern Africa and asked for Soviet help with Nelson Mandela, whom he considered to be “out of touch,” saying that “we would welcome any steps that would bring him closer to reality of the modern world.” By contrast, he spoke strongly in support of South African President F.W. de Klerk. Gorbachev repeatedly put off a personal meeting with Mandela, partially because he knew the Americans’ attitude toward him. Bush mentioned the India-Pakistan conflict as another issue that could benefit from Soviet help—admitting the Pakistanis had lied to the U.S. about their work on nuclear weapons, and asking the Soviets to work with their Indian allies.

The conversation barely addressed arms control. Gorbachev asked about the next stage of negotiations on strategic weapons reductions and the long-discussed comprehensive test ban. The Soviets tried to set a date for starting talks on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, but the U.S. side did not respond. And on the issue of biological weapons, the Soviets asked for a visit by their experts to the United States before August 26 and reiterated their agreement to invite American experts and to continue consultations. Surprisingly, the Soviet side did not even mention the controversial ABM systems or the statement on observance of the 1972 ABM Treaty, which they had previously tried so hard to get from the Americans. Instead, they ended up making a statement of their own at the signing of the START Treaty while the U.S. side kept its silence.

The two most important regional issues discussed were Yugoslavia and the Middle East. On the former, Gorbachev spoke very strongly, as if he could foresee the events of the near future. Mindful of nationalist claims in the Soviet

³⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 513.

republics, he warned that “even a partial disintegration of Yugoslavia could create a chain reaction that will be worse than a nuclear bomb.” He wanted the summit joint statement to include language of respect for “territorial integrity,” noting that “seventy percent of interstate borders in the Soviet Union are in essence not defined.” Bush was reluctant to lend his support out of concern not to create problems for the EEC, observing that Germany maintained strong support for Slovenian independence.³⁸

On the Middle East, the two leaders found their positions were remarkably similar, giving grounds for optimism that they might be able to make crucial progress on the Palestinian issue. Bush stated his strong opposition to Israeli settlements but expressed doubt about Israel’s willingness to negotiate on the matter. He asked Gorbachev to use his influence with the Palestinians so as not to give the Israelis an excuse to shun the negotiating table. Interestingly, both leaders were critical of their allies in this exchange and, in a way, agreed to cooperate behind their backs to bring them to the table. It was an expression of what Gorbachev believed their unique great-power role could be in mediating regional conflicts. The two principals decided to convene a conference on the Middle East in October 1991, calling it a possible breakthrough.³⁹

During the summer, especially now that he believed the new Union Treaty process was robust, Gorbachev felt he needed the support and approval of the U.S. president—both to reaffirm his own role as a world leader and to be able to wrest financial support from the United States. All the while he knew in his heart that the American leadership did not fully trust him and his reforms. Now, in their most relaxed conversation, Gorbachev decided to press the issue directly: “we made a choice in favor of reforms, and no ideological breaks, no dogmas and stereotypes can stop me. The main priority for me today is to solve the issues with our statehood, the move toward a new economy.” He called the Americans “our strictest judges.” The approach seemed to work. For the first time in all their experience together, Bush actually addressed the issue head-on, essentially admitting that he had not fully trusted his Soviet counterpart before: “I have much more confidence in your willingness to change than I did before,” the president said. “I trust your intentions and after our conversation yesterday I am more confident than I was before this visit that you know where you want to go, and how to get there. I would like you to be certain that we trust your intentions.”⁴⁰ It might indeed be the case that only then did Bush grasp what Gorbachev and his reforms were truly about—too late to be able to act meaningfully, however.

After returning to Moscow, Bush and Gorbachev signed the long-awaited START Treaty, which would reduce U.S. strategic arms by 25 percent and Soviet strategic arms by 35 percent, and decided to begin further consultations on

³⁸ Document No. 139.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

strategic weapons reductions in October. The Soviet side made a unilateral statement that tied START reductions to observance of the 1972 ABM Treaty. For all the hard work that went into it and the fanfare surrounding the signing of the treaty, as Garthoff pointed out, it brought the totals of strategic nuclear weapons “roughly to where they were when START negotiations began in 1982.”⁴¹

After Moscow, Bush flew to Kiev with very mixed feelings. According to Robert Hutchings, the reason for the president’s trip to Ukraine was “to show understanding for the aspirations of Ukrainians and others,” but his speech to the Ukrainian parliament was intended “to promote the ongoing negotiations between Gorbachev and republic leaders toward the new Union Treaty. Neither objective was achieved.”⁴² The speech to parliament considered the possibility of the violent disintegration of a nuclear superpower and the context of unfolding events in Yugoslavia. In retrospect, it appears to have been a most sensible and balanced address, and was arguably one of the president’s best speeches, but at the time the media ridiculed it as the “Chicken Kiev” speech. In it, Bush drew a distinction between liberty and formal state independence, a point that could have been very useful for many in the Soviet republics at the time—had they listened—especially in light of the rise to power of authoritarian and nationalist leaderships in many of them over the next several years. Bush declared that “freedom is not the same as independence. Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism.”⁴³ Naturally, the speech sounded offensive to Ukrainian nationalists, as if Bush was siding with Moscow against the republics, which, in a way, was exactly what he meant to do as long as the new Union Treaty appeared viable.

The last superpower summit ended on a high note—the START Treaty was signed, trust between the two presidents seemed to be reaffirmed in word and deed, and new horizons of cooperation had been outlined. At the August 1 NATO briefing, Undersecretary of Defense Reginald Bartholomew emphasized the different nature of this first post-Cold War summit. No longer were complicated arms control issues the focus, but both governments began to lay the groundwork for a new era in relations.

However, the summit meant different things to Gorbachev and to Bush. Gorbachev gave an exceptionally high assessment of it in his memoir, devoting seven pages to the issues and concepts discussed, and presenting it as the ultimate example of what was possible globally if the two superpowers found a way to work together.⁴⁴ By contrast, Bush and Scowcroft were quite reserved in their assessment and barely mentioned the substance of the negotiations with the exception

⁴¹ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 466.

⁴² Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 329.

⁴³ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991*, v. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 1007.

⁴⁴ Gorbachev, *Zhizn’ I reformy*, pp. 301–307.

of the Soviet internal problems and the Union Treaty.⁴⁵ Yet, the quality of the conversation between the two leaders was truly unprecedented, the level and scope of cooperation between the two powers quite unbelievable for such old rivals.

It was also inevitable that both would shift their focus to domestic issues. For Gorbachev, it looked like the United States would finally get behind his idea for a new Union Treaty and accept his views on domestic reform. The U.S., however, remained wary of the viability of his plans, unwilling to move fast on strategic arms control, and mostly focused on the 1992 electoral campaign. Bush's innate caution and political considerations made him unwilling to commit to any serious economic aid even if he now trusted his counterpart more than ever. For the American team, the 1991 Moscow summit was a ceremonial occasion, a useful visit to affirm the new quality of bilateral relations and to demonstrate the administration's achievements. But in their eyes it was far from the breakthrough and "stellar hour" described by Gorbachev.

⁴⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 510–513.

Document No. 122: Record of Conversation between
Gorbachev and Baker, Moscow

March 15, 1991

In this excerpt of a much longer conversation, the U.S. secretary of state raises the “extremely sensitive” issue of Soviet compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. The first U.S. and British démarches on the subject were made in May 1990, and Bush raised it with Gorbachev during their private Camp David discussions on June 2, 1990. Gorbachev had always denied that the Soviet Union had a military biological program, but at the same time the Soviets believed that the U.S. was also secretly engaged in similar activities. The Soviet leader had proposed an exchange of experts to visit both countries’ suspected biological facilities in summer 1990, but after the U.S. delegation’s visit the concerns only deepened. Here Baker confronts Gorbachev for the first time with some astounding facts about Soviet activities and concludes that the USSR had a “program of creating a potential for an offensive capability in biological weapons.” Gorbachev’s reaction is denial, but with notes of uncertainty—could it be that the Americans are right and his own military has been feeding him wrong information? He asks for an official document listing the alleged transgressions. Gorbachev is also suspicious because Baker does not consent to immediate reciprocal visits by Soviet experts. Both sides agree to keep this conversation and related information in strictest confidence so as not to undermine the relationship and the ongoing arms control negotiations.

Gorbachev: I am glad to welcome you, Mr. Secretary of State.

Baker: I am happy to be here. I greatly appreciate your willingness to devote time for this meeting. I would like to inform you that we had good discussions with A. A. Bessmertnykh.

Gorbachev: You and he can use time very effectively, working without interpreters. But that probably has its own difficulties—because you do not have time to come up with all kinds of tricky answers. You just have to say what is on your mind.

I hope you can see that nothing has changed in our approach to Soviet-American relations. We are still open for dialogue, and I wanted to mention that from the start, because it is of principal importance. We are coming out of a difficult phase right now. We have things to discuss and to do now.

Baker: Yes, there is much to do. First of all, I would like to affirm what you said about the importance of dialogue between the USSR and the USA. In the last several years we have achieved wonderful progress. And as I said to you multiple times, including here, there would have been no progress if not for your personal efforts. [...] I told you during our meeting last September that, in my view, you demonstrated exceptional political courage. I still believe that, as does President Bush.

I would like to express my appreciation for the answer you just gave to the correspondents to the question about the dinner this evening, to which I am inviting leaders of the republics and some other people. I want you to know: we will keep making it clear to them and to the press that we are dealing with the Soviet Union only through the Center, through your government.

Gorbachev: The only thing I would like to say about this dinner is that I found out about it from the U.S. press. And the minister was informed about it belatedly.

Baker: If that is so, I am sorry about that. [...] We constantly emphasize that we support the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union. We recognize the USSR, in all its borders, excluding the Baltics, from 1933. When we visit other countries, we also meet with representatives of the opposition. When leaders of other states visit the United States, they also meet with representatives of our opposition—the leadership of the Democratic Party.

Gorbachev: Is there a real difference between Democrats and Republicans?

Baker: Yes, and a big one.

Gorbachev: I have never noticed that.

Baker: We have a very strong competition between parties. We insist that even though our visitors can have contacts with Democratic leaders, they have to deal with us as the U.S. government. We deal with you in the same way. We will consistently mention this in our public statements and in our contacts with those people with whom we meet.

At the same time, I cannot fail to mention the fact that our countries have different opinions regarding the Baltics. However, we have discussed that many times before.

Gorbachev: However, we remember that you explained and confirmed that you recognize the Baltic republics in the borders of 1939.

Baker: Yes, this is so. We are doing everything possible to make sure that our actions in this aspect of our relationship will not lead to an aggravation of the confrontation between the Center and the Baltics. We are in favor of resolving this problem through dialogue and negotiations. We are refusing to recognize the Baltics officially, even though they very much desire it. We are saying that there is no need for such a recognition because we have never annulled our recognition of those states. During more than 40 years the U.S. position has been that we do not recognize the forceful incorporation of the Baltic republics into the USSR. However, we are trying to act with appropriate understanding of the importance of U.S.-Soviet relations. [...]

President Bush and I give our most active support to your policies and to you personally. We want you to succeed. We want it as much as you do, and maybe even more.

Gorbachev: Not likely.

Baker: You are probably right. Then let me be more precise: we want you to succeed very, very much. It is important not only for the USA and the USSR but also for the entire world.

Today you often see, including in the press, statements to the effect that President Gorbachev's policy has shifted to the right. [...] We want to believe that those correctives that you introduced to your course are directed exclusively toward ensuring success of the reform and democratization, that there has not been a fundamental change and retreat from your course, that you are not captured by the forces of the past. We want to believe it, and we do believe it.

Gorbachev: So do you want to believe or do you actually believe it?

Baker: Both.

I spoke with President Bush recently and we both came to the conclusion that if you do not change your course, your place in history is guaranteed. [...]

Baker: Now I would like to raise one more extremely sensitive issue in the sphere of arms control. I am doing so at the personal request of the president. President Bush raised this issue in a conversation with you, I spoke about it with E.A. Shevardnadze. Possibly Prime Minister Thatcher raised it too. I am talking about our concerns regarding [your] non-compliance with the convention banning bacteriological weapons.

Gorbachev: I remember the discussion of this issue at Camp David. It was also raised by John Major in our recent conversation. I told him: give it to us in written form.

Baker: I will do that.

Gorbachev: We also want our experts to go on an analogous mission. We should compare, what is the difference. Maybe some misunderstanding emerged between us. I understand that this process has different stages, and maybe that is giving rise to some doubts. But we made a principally important decision, and carried out great work.

Baker: However, some facts discovered in the course of the trip by our experts only deepened our concerns. I could very briefly present them to you, or maybe to the minister.

Gorbachev: We need an official document, where all this is stated. But do I understand you correctly that you would welcome a reciprocal visit by Soviet experts?

Baker: In principle, we gave our agreement to it. However, in terms of dates, the trip by your experts would have to be determined by the completion of the first round of visits. I am not at all saying that we retract our initial agreement. But as far as the dates for the reciprocal trip, we have a certain position on this issue, which we already stated firmly during the preliminary discussion with your delegation in London. That is why now, after serious questions emerged in light of what we saw during the trip we would like to resolve those first and only after that organize any additional trips by our experts and trips for your experts to our facilities. Of course, our agreement remains valid in principle. It was given on the basis of the conditions coordinated in London.

I would like to give you a list of possible steps the Soviet side could undertake that would allow us to restart the entire process. In addition, I would like to briefly list the facts that caused our concerns.

We are talking about the existence in the USSR of a colossal military-biological program, which employs 25,000 people, and [within which] 10 scientific-research organizations and 20 industrial enterprises were created. Forty percent of its financing comes from the Defense Ministry. The leadership of this program is also military, and 40 percent of the research [projects] are secret. We believe that activities of such scale exceed considerably any possible needs of research on protection from bacteriological weapons.

These facilities have a large number of special explosion bunkers for testing the impact of various biological agents on animals. Some of those bunkers are recently built. We do not see any explanation for this fact other than the following: a program for developing the potential for an offensive capability in biological weapons is being carried out. The centers have a large number of stationary and mobile fermenters, which also exceed the needs of defensive research. Besides, we noted extremely high levels of defense around these centers.

Gorbachev: Well, we have a strict defensive [regime] in any case.

Baker: I will give you a detailed list.

Gorbachev: Yes, by all means. It is possible that you are simply not taking into account the extremely high degree of monopolization and concentration of any industry in our country. This originated back in the 1930s, when we, by the way, borrowed some approaches from you. For example, Academician [Yuri] Ovchinnikov has created huge research centers in microbiology, where all activity in this area of the country is concentrated.

When the president told me about this problem at Camp David, I requested information from our experts, and proposed, so that there would be no doubts, to organize visits by experts. Maybe it is all fantasy?

Baker: No, we do not think so. We were hoping that our visits would alleviate our concerns, but in the end they only deepened them. In many instances, when our experts posed a question, they were told that only the military could give answers.

Gorbachev: Okay, give me your list. But do I understand you correctly—you do not want our experts to visit you?

Baker: Not now. First of all we have to remove the concerns that emerged in the course of our visits. This issue was raised by us, because we had grounds to believe that the Soviet Union is conducting some activity in violation of the Bacteriological Weapons Convention. The Soviet side raised the issue of strict reciprocity. We agreed to reciprocity, but only in principle.

Gorbachev: But now I am having doubts myself. I proposed to your experts to come here, and they did. But you don't want our experts to come [to the U.S.].

Baker: You can look at how this issue is reflected in the agreement between our delegations.

Gorbachev: It is not the legal side that is important here, not the "hooks," but real politics. But after all, give me your paper, and we will look at it.

Baker: We have not informed Congress about this issue yet, but we will have to do it sooner or later. And Congress, as you know, does not keep secrets very well.

Gorbachev: We can also say something.

Bessmertnykh: I see a danger here. We tried to keep this whole issue and the exchange of visits away from any publicity, keeping in mind that it is extremely sensitive and has to stay confidential.

Gorbachev: Yes, and the president talked to me about this topic during our walk, in private.

Bessmertnykh: Of course, we should get your paper. As a lawyer, I can tell you that everything you mentioned here is just circumstantial evidence. What kind of argument is this—the program involves many people, big buildings, etc.? What if one were to take your big enterprises, General Motors, for example?

Baker: I understand you. And I would like to emphasize that we have been dealing with this issue very quietly, because we understand the great damage that public revelations about it could do to our efforts at arms control. But I think you understand: we cannot not inform Congress about the existence of this problem. Of course we will provide this information during closed sessions, but leaks are quite possible. If we give you the list of our concerns and if you start taking measures to address them, then we would be able to say that these problems do not interfere with our efforts at arms control and do not affect the overall character of Soviet-American relations.

Gorbachev: Mr. Secretary of State, your position looks extremely strange to me. This is some kind of unilateral pressure.

Baker: We do not have such intentions.

Gorbachev: We do not want any misunderstandings [doubts] to be left here. We could have responded to your raising this problem with some “deaf” paper, but instead we invited you here. Maybe it would have been better not to invite you at all, and then there would be nothing like this.

Baker: No, we would have had to inform Congress anyway, because we had these concerns. But then it would have been even worse. And now we at least can say that we drew the Soviet Union’s attention to this issue and the Soviet side is currently taking steps to correct the situation. From the very beginning, we presented concrete data to you and expressed our concerns. And of course, it is good that you invited us to visit your sites. At the least we can say to Congress that the Soviet Union has responded, it did not close the doors to us. It is still possible to save the situation.

And we are not saying that your people cannot come. But right now we need to close the first stage. Maybe you could remove our concerns. And then we do not exclude anything, our agreement in principle remains in force. But it is necessary first that you adopt some measures. These are also matters of trust between our countries, questions of abiding by arms control agreements.

Gorbachev: I do not like all this. You put us in a situation where we have to report to you on everything you raise on your side. In order to close this issue, I would like to confirm: we are abiding by our agreements and we are ready to carry out an exchange of visits, in order for both sides to be assured of that.

And you have no grounds to doubt our compliance with our agreements, or, even more so, to suspect any ill intentions [on our part].

Baker: Are you ready to accept our document?

Gorbachev: Yes.

Baker: We will do that, and you will give us a response to the issues raised in it, and then we can discuss briefly what the situation is with the visits. Let us do so in a short period of time.

Gorbachev: Good. Let us not make a tragedy out of it. It is very unpleasant that such suspicions arise.

[Source: *Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Published in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, v. 25, pp. 39–54. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 123: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Shevardnadze, Washington, 1:40 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.

May 6, 1991

Bush meets Shevardnadze in the latter's unofficial capacity as president of the Foreign Policy Association, a think tank he just created. Shevardnadze resigned as foreign minister in December, warning against approaching dictatorship, and protesting Gorbachev's turn toward the conservatives. But here he comes to seek support for the embattled reform program. He describes the dismal situation in his country, pointing specifically to economic instability, the crisis with nationalities, and the rising conservative opposition. He regrets that his government was "late" on several critically important issues, especially the Union Treaty: "if we had offered this treaty in 1987 or even 1988, all would have signed it." But most of all the former foreign minister is "concerned, indeed frightened, by the pause in our relations." He urges Bush not to delay the next summit and to keep engaging with Gorbachev. The two then discuss the Gorbachev-Yeltsin relationship and wonder why they cannot find a way to work together. Shevardnadze appeals to the president to secure agricultural credits for the Soviet Union and to move quickly on CFE and START in order to spur demilitarization. For Bush, however, finalizing these two treaties remains the primary precondition for holding the summit.

The President: Welcome. I am most interested to hear how it is at home. Jim (Baker) will fill me in on your talks. I am glad you had a chance to meet with the Vice President.

When I think of all the hard work we put in on this relationship, I am anxious that it stays strong. Some criticize us for staying too close to Mikhail Gorbachev. We will deal with him with respect and friendship as long as he is President.

Still, we are concerned with some of the directions of change.

Mr. Shevardnadze: Mr. President, first of all President Gorbachev sends his very warmest greetings. We had extensive discussions before I left. He values his relationship with you.

I have three points I wish to make:

First, things are really very tough with us. The American public cannot seem neutral to events in the Soviet Union. We have a new relationship, and the whole world has gained as a result. It is a historic achievement.

Second, the level of instability in the Soviet Union is a subject of concern for our people, and for the whole world. The instability is now very serious.

Economic instability. Today I said we missed the boat on the economy. We had tremendous aspirations during those first years. We knew we had to go to the market, introduce price reform, make a radical shift.

But we believed we were not ready. Nobody knew what a market really was. We were late. Now we are in a political conflict, a battle, growing lawlessness.

Nationalities. I told Jim about this one. We didn't do all we should have done. I am not criticizing the President here, but rather myself. We're offering now a Union Treaty which six republics do not want to sign. If we had offered this treaty in 1987 or even 1988, all would have signed it.

Again, we were late. We had an idea, but we felt the people were not ready. It seems we miscalculated.

Conservative opposition. We did not take our opposition into account. When we started *perestroika* and new thinking—which were revolutionary—we should have thought of how to create a constructive opposition. But, because we did not think that way, the result was a conservative opposition. You have conservatives here, but they are of a different type than ours.

The President: Here conservative is a good word.

Mr. Shevardnadze: They exist—in the apparat, the security services, the army and the party. And they are well-organized.

But what of the democratic movement? They have no platform. They consist of people running hither and thither. They have no real structure.

In the recent past Gorbachev signed a joint statement [with the nine republics], which is not trivial. Moreover, for good or ill, we have gotten moving on price reform, which was tough.

Third, most encouraging is that the democrats have begun to move, after all the problems last year stemming from the lack of a platform and of a [sic] organizational structure.

The new democratic movement is not directed against the President, but rather as a defense of the President. All he has now is a right wing to lean on. He needs a stable structure on the left which will give him an alternative to the right.

The population is upset now. There are tremendous social frictions stemming from a sense of disappointment. This is a dangerous situation. If we cannot address social problems in the next three to four months people might come out in the streets. They could ask for someone with a strong hand to restore order.

Will this affect the international situation? If we can't stabilize it, then it no doubt will have a strong effect. There will be no need to talk of "new thinking." I am trying to be realistic. I hope reason will prevail.

All of this has an effect on U.S.-Soviet relations. I am concerned, indeed frightened, by the pause in our relations. There are, of course, reasons—the Persian Gulf, for example. We were good partners in the Middle East. Certainly there were times where we had slight disagreements.

The President: Those didn't bother us at all. We understand Mikhail Gorbachev's position. The Soviet Union stayed with us to the end.

Mr. Shevardnadze: I agree. With respect to the pause. As a private person—no one told me to say this, although I did just talk to President Gorbachev. I am

simply here to see old friends—I am afraid of the pause. We cannot allow the dynamics of this relationship to slide backwards.

Mr. President, no matter what happens in the Soviet Union, U.S.-Soviet relations will determine the political climate until the end of the century. Mikhail Gorbachev is of the same mind. We should not allow a retreat from the agreements we have achieved. No serious barriers remain on CFE; really only a few pieces of equipment. The remaining issues on START seem to be essentially technical. If we can manage to resolve these two, then we ought to have a summit.

If you bear in mind the considerable progress made in the USSR, then you shouldn't delay any longer. A longer pause would lead to doubts (about the U.S.-Soviet relationship), which would not serve either side.

The President: I want a summit. The problem is that we have CFE and START as preconditions. That is the way it has evolved. We also have other differences—over the Baltics, grain credits, and others—but these should not stand in the way of a summit. I would like to see the two arms control agreements, and then get on with the Summit.

I'd like to do the summit in a way that strengthens Gorbachev. I wish he could make progress on the economy and the republics. The best thing he could do for the Baltics is to free them. That would bring an enormous benefit in terms of public opinion. This is not a *sine qua non*. If I went to have a summit today, some groups in the US would be upset. That won't keep me from doing it.

What about economic reform? Can we expect more steps soon?

Mr. Shevardnadze: He already has taken a couple of steps. Unfortunately many were half-measures. Now we're living in this crisis situation. We have 3–4–5 months. If we don't give people basic staple goods then we can expect a crisis from the high prices and empty shelves. We need to get over the next few months. The reforms will continue no matter what. There is no way back. But if the crisis grows worse, dictatorship comes.

The President: Yel'tsin stands mainly for the things we like to see:

- free the Balts
- Cuba
- Afghanistan
- Radical economic reform

So, from what we hear, he shares many of our goals. But why haven't people rallied around that message? Why can't Gorbachev and Yel'tsin get together? Is it personal? Is it that Yel'tsin can't deliver?

Mr. Shevardnadze: It is hard to talk about a man until he becomes #1. I know him relatively well. He is talented, energetic, strong. What will happen later? He's shooting for the top spot. Relations between Yel'tsin and Gorbachev are not simple. The overall situation is that they found the will to begin the dialogue. Many called for this. Look at Gorbachev and Reagan, with the images of the Soviet "evil empire" and the US as a "center for imperialism." Nonetheless we started a dialogue, so why can't Yel'tsin and Gorbachev get together? Confrontation is not in the interest of people.

The President: Would Yel'tsin be strongly opposed to the military and the KGB?

Mr. Shevardnadze: When we talk about the military, it is always in terms of conservative, right-wing forces. I personally know many progressives in the military, especially at middle levels. They have good feelings towards Yel'tsin. There are military offices who support him.

The President: It's hard to sort it all out from here. Indeed there is a tendency to look at the military as a monolith.

Mr. Shevardnadze: When they issue orders they are carried out. But there are different points of view [within the army]. Look, for example, at the issue of military reform.

The President: If you were here in this chair, what would you do to try to preserve and strengthen the US-Soviet relationship? What two or three things would you like to see me do?

Mr. Shevardnadze: I know you wish to support reforms. The most important things are:

First, at a minimum we must try to keep our cooperation at the level we have already achieved by moving ahead on CFE and START. This will lead to demilitarization which helps democratization and reforms.

Demilitarization is the best way to help the Soviet Union. The threat of instability in the Soviet Union is worse than that posed by Saddam Hussein.

The President: So that's number 1. What else?

Mr. Shevardnadze: Second, if I may be frank: develop economic relations. On a specific matter, you supported us last year on farm credits. I know this has now resurfaced. As a citizen I cannot but ask you to do it again. It is not by accident that I say the next few months are critical. We must let people feel something tangible. I know it is hard, but if it is possible, give the credits.

The President: The law is quite restrictive on creditworthiness. There may be ways to get around it. Candidly, I'd like to do it, but it could be hard. Jim, is there any way around this?

Secretary Baker: We talked to Eduard about this.

The President: Is there no way to secure the loans? I don't want Mikhail Gorbachev to misunderstand me. I want to do this. There is strong support from our agricultural areas. But credits without market reforms don't solve any problems.

Mr. Shevardnadze: Mr. President, you can't stop the reforms. Even if we can't maintain a single Soviet Union, reform will continue. Russia, Kazakhstan, and republics are already doing reform. Up to now the greatest fact was the power of the center. No longer. Reforms will go on.

The President: Would any of these credits go to Baltic states?

Mr. Shevardnadze: We can set those conditions. I can tell Mikhail Gorbachev it will only work if we divide up the benefits.

The President: I think it will only work that way. In terms of U.S. politics, if that could be arranged it would be very helpful.

Mr. Shevardnadze: I'll tell Mikhail Gorbachev. I think we can find a solution. The center and the republics have ties. The republics just declared that they want

to be independent. It would be foolish to break off every tie. The republics' economies will remain closely tied to each other. Their political relationships may change dramatically.

The President: Did you talk to Jim Baker about Iraq?

Secretary Baker: We talked on Iraq, and on many other aspects of the Middle East situation.

The President: Working together in the Middle East would help a lot. Was there resentment in the Soviet military about the way we conducted the war?

Mr. Shevardnadze: I can't say that all the Soviet military were resentful. There were people who had a stake in the outcome, and they got upset. For those military advisors who sat in Iraq since 1972, this was a fiasco.

The President: We should continue these high-level military-to-military contacts—Akhromeyev and Crowe were a good thing. Moiseyev seemed an interesting fellow.

Mr. Shevardnadze: It is a good idea. But we have to be demanding with the military. They meet like good fellows, and tell each other all their secrets. But when it comes time to sign on the dotted line, they balk. They like each other, and are very polite. The cooperation with Akhromeyev, which resulted in very good relations, didn't give us much.

The President: Akhromeyev seems to have moved away from the U.S. I've seen some hard-line statements from him.

Mr. Shevardnadze: The SOYUZ group in the Congress has some very reactionary people in it. Akhromeyev is in that group. We have to listen to them.

Secretary Baker: No one pushes any more the way Eduard did when he was in office.

Mr. Shevardnadze: The move from totalitarianism to a government based on laws is tough. SOYUZ and other groups don't allow diverse discussion.

The President: I see I'm behind schedule. It was a joy to have you here. If there is any way we can be of help to you on this trip, please call Jim. I will never forget your personal contribution. If you decide to get back into politics you would find lots of support.

Mr. Shevardnadze: I appreciate that. I am grateful to you for all of your cooperation.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 124: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 9:03 a.m. – 9:47 a.m.

May 11, 1991

Bush calls Gorbachev after Shevardnadze's recent visit. Both men express concern about the sense of drift in bilateral relations. This is the first conversation between the two since Gorbachev's call to Bush on February 23, when he made a last-ditch effort to avoid a ground war in the Persian Gulf. Gorbachev hints at a major decision on the anti-crisis economic plan he will have to make in the coming days and weeks, even the possibility of "very drastic measures." Bush's focus is on arms control. He reiterates that finalizing the CFE is a precondition for a summit, and declares that he also wants START to be ready to sign. Gorbachev concurs and says that it should be a "very large-scale summit." The two leaders talk about China, agreeing that Beijing should not be isolated. However, on the topic most important to Gorbachev—economic assistance—Bush remains uncommitted, citing the need for a new economic reform plan and an emigration bill as preconditions.

The President: Mikhail, this is George Bush. How are you?

President Gorbachev: I am very happy to hear your voice. And I am happy that your mild condition is behind you.

The President: I'm up at Camp David and I feel good. My heart is perfect and once I get this thyroid under control I will be totally normal.

President Gorbachev: Well, George, I hope you will quit jogging several miles every morning and confine yourself to horseshoes.

The President: I wanted to talk with you today—I don't want to see our countries drift apart. I read Matlock's report and it had me concerned. And when Eduard Shevardnadze was here, he said the same thing.

President Gorbachev: My dear George, I thought since we have covered a lot of ground to reach the current state of our relations, that when we reached it, it was well received. So I decided to share my immediate concerns quite sincerely so I could prevent a bad turn in the relationship.

The President: Good. First, I remain firmly committed to a strong cooperative relationship with you. I tried to make that clear in my press conference the other day. I know what you stand for. As long as you continue down the reform path with measures like the new agreement with the nine republics, you'll get nothing but praise from me. Lastly, you are correct. Some in the U.S. want us to pull back now. I don't want to do that and will not do that.

President Gorbachev: I am very happy to hear that. I wish to repeat the phrase you used—I also am firmly committed to cooperation. Acting together we have accomplished a great deal. I am quite convinced we should continue to develop our relations which is in the national interests of the U.S. and USSR. I intend to

stand by that approach in the USSR. It enjoys support among people in the USSR but there are some, of course, who have doubts.

Of course, we are going through a special transition period. There are new forms of doing things and no ready-made solutions. Some advocate one thing and some another. We will have to go through this period and shape a new life drawing from the experience and support of others. One very important point to share with you is that we are faced with so many difficulties. Virtually all of the republics felt we had to stand together. We are now finishing the anti-crisis program. You know about it. People from all the republics are now in a Moscow suburb working to complete it.

So, I want you to understand that it will take an effort to make it succeed. Because there are so many things we simply didn't know before. There is no guarantee, given the size of the country and its problems, that we may not get something we didn't expect. I think the biggest mistake would be for us to stop or succumb to pressure or move in reverse. And in this type of situation, I sometimes have to take very drastic measures. So, George, this is what I wanted you to keep in mind.

In a normal situation, some of these steps would have been seen as unacceptable. But we have to make allowances for this period. And when I'm looking to you, George, for assistance, it is because I am in this kind of situation. I really need it. And I appreciate the political support and friendly feelings I've been getting. My hope is that these feelings will stay unabated. The main thing for you, George, is that you must know I've made the choice—there is no alternative for me. I am going to do everything I can to continue moving along the track of renewal.

Now this is what I wanted you to know. We are at a very important moment. The specific point is that I will take some major decisions in the next few days and weeks. Well, I've been going on for some time now but since we had not spoken in a while, I thought I would be specific about things.

The President: Mikhail, if you have time, I want to touch on arms control and economic issues.

President Gorbachev: That is what I thought we would do after discussing this general overview.

The President: If it is okay with you, I would like to start with arms control.

The CFE problem, frankly, is putting a strain on our relationship. Our biggest concern is naval infantry. It is causing a problem not so much here in the Administration but is very difficult across our public opinion. We will see Moiseyev and hope his visit will lead to a rapid solution of this corrosive issue.

Having gotten CFE done, I believe we could then get our experts to overcome the difficulties on START. Both of us should make sure that gets done. If we can get a CFE solution, I would be anxious to have a summit this summer and make every effort to get START ready for signature. I think we have narrowed the differences but am anxious to get your views. That is about all I have to say on arms control.

President Gorbachev: Well, George, I want you to know I want to resolve quickly the first issue in the near future. Moiseyev will bring something to help push things in that direction. I also share your desire to have a treaty ready to sign. It is simply a duty for us to go ahead with the treaty on fifty percent reductions, especially since we have already accomplished a lot. And, of course, if that goes well, we could have a very large-scale summit this summer.

The President: I would like to do that very much.

President Gorbachev: That is my goal too. Of course, we could have an interim meeting if there are delays, but our goal should be a large-scale meeting.

The President: I agree with that.

President Gorbachev: I also think there is a chance, George, to succeed in our cooperation in the Middle East. Alexander and Jim are moving on the same track. There is a possibility of cooperation there as in the Persian Gulf.

The President: I think it is very good that Jim and Sasha are working together. They will meet in Cairo. It is a wonderful arrangement we are talking about. I hope Israel and the Arabs will be cooperative.

President Gorbachev: I think if we act together, we can push them in the right direction.

The President: At some point, we may have to do so publicly if the Baker-Bessmertnykh shuttle diplomacy doesn't work.

President Gorbachev: Okay, I agree to give that some thought at a later point.

Now within the next three days, I will see the leader of China in Moscow. At the conclusion of this meeting, I will brief you on the visit. Now let me give you my views. We appreciate the role of China on the Persian Gulf—its cooperation there and in other areas. China's positive decision was well thought out.

The President: Our relations with China are strained more than I want. I have the MFN question. There is big opposition in Congress. But I want to find a way to renew their MFN. I don't want to isolate China. If you can convey that, I would appreciate it. Is Li Peng or Yang Shangkun coming?

President Gorbachev: No, Jiang Zemin. I think we can proceed with what we agreed as we talked in the limousine.

The President: Right. I would like to talk about economic issues now.

President Gorbachev: Yes.

The President: One, I know you are in a difficult economic situation. You have explained that at the beginning. In the spirit of frankness, our experts don't believe Pavlov's anti-crisis program will move you fast enough to market reform. If there are more steps toward a market reform effort, then we could do more and help especially with the international financial organizations.

I think... Excuse me, go ahead.

President Gorbachev: Excuse me for interrupting.

The President: I just wanted to say that it would lead quickly to Special Associate Status in the IMF and World Bank. There is also great interest here in the emigration bill that is to be voted on. If that passes and meets internationally acceptable standards, then it would enable us to take steps to normalize the

economic relationship; steps such as the trade agreement, and most favored nations status. Then we could go to Congress to repeal the legislative restrictions that make trade and finance so difficult for us.

I have several more points but maybe I should stop there for your comments.

President Gorbachev: I would like to comment on that, George. Among our pressing problems is stabilizing the economic relationship between regions and even enterprises. There are many pitfalls here. The central and republic authorities are on to this issue and are moving to solve it. This is one of the most pressing tasks at hand. I would call it an emergency task. We have done a lot on the planting campaign in the rural areas and have been rather successful at that. In April, agricultural production was up 3–4 percent compared to last year. But there are still difficulties. We are at the end of spring and summer is coming. Last year's reserves are depleted and there is still no new harvest so we have some difficulties.

On Pavlov's program, it has been very seriously changed. But, George, you must always bear in mind the realistic context of our society. The overriding focus of the Pavlov program is to fight inflation through drastic fiscal measures and at the same time stimulate entrepreneurship. You know there are many provisions in the Pavlov program for stepped-up privatization and destatization. There is more economic freedom. It is under strong fire from the trade unions and some in the party organizations. Some call it anti-people and even inhuman. And you know, George, you will reach a different conclusion depending on whether or not you look at the Pavlov program from an academic angle or from a realistic context of society. This is no longer just Pavlov's program by the way since it has been accepted by all the republics.

So much for the current situation. On your other points, I wish to propose something else. What if for the purposes of continuing this discussion, I send over Primakov and Yavlinsky to discuss the possibility of cooperation in the G-7 framework and other international organizations? I know that there is emerging cooperation at the G-7 experts level with your people and ours. But even your experts think it is time to elevate these discussions to a governmental level.

The President: We could talk about that. But I'm not sure exactly what you mean.

President Gorbachev: What I have in mind is that the G-7 will discuss cooperation with the USSR and the place and role of the G-7 in these developments. There is the possibility of Soviet participation in the IMF and participation by the head of the Soviet state in the G-7 session. I'll send Primakov. He will have a package of items to discuss in a closed session.

The President: That is a good idea and I have one to add on agriculture.

President Gorbachev: I just received your letter. I welcome the idea and am prepared to join.

The President: Would May 20 be too soon for the team to arrive?

President Gorbachev: No, it is fine. I will give the appropriate instructions tomorrow. There is much to be done to prepare for his.

The President: I think we can be very helpful. I want you to know that I want it to lead to what you need in agricultural credits.

President Gorbachev: I welcome this very much. I just got the translation of your letter before our conversation. It is a very exciting idea and very encouraging. And I will appoint tomorrow the people who will start work on this.

The President: Good. I will instruct our people to come in a positive frame of mind—to try to help and not find problems but find reasons to help. After that, Mikhail, it seems to me that at the summit we could discuss financial institutions, energy, the environment and housing. We can discuss this at our meeting.

President Gorbachev: George, these are important and encouraging subjects. I discussed some of these with Mitterrand. George, I am really happy that we had this substantive conversation. It had been some time since we had a conversation like that.

The President: Let me ask you a personal question. How is your health?

President Gorbachev: So far, I am hanging tough.

The President: That is good. You are my friend and I want to prove that and work with you. I don't like stories in our press that put you down. I hope you noticed that I took them on in public the other day.

President Gorbachev: Well, thank you for those words. I share your approach on this and other issues. I have made a choice, a serious choice on relations with the U.S., providing it is reciprocated, and will follow that course.

The President: That is wonderful. It is nice talking to you and good luck.

President Gorbachev: Thank you, George, and the same to you. Best regards to all at Camp David, especially Barbara.

The President: She just walked in the room and just walked out. She is on her way to the gym.

President Gorbachev: I am glad to hear that.

The President: Okay. Good-bye.

President Gorbachev: Good-bye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0204-F/1 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 125: Handwritten Memorandum from Hewett
for the President: "President Gorbachev's Remarks on Relations
with the U.S."

Circa May 25, 1991

Bush's senior director for Soviet affairs on the NSC staff, Ed Hewett, reports on his meeting with Gorbachev during his trip to Moscow to discuss the agricultural credits Gorbachev badly needs to proceed with reform. In this description, he finds Gorbachev not a "desperate man" but confident and comfortable with his return to a radical course. At the same time, Gorbachev is clearly "frustrated by what he sees as our reluctance to work with him, and our tendency to 'move the goal posts.'" Gorbachev believes that some actors within the Bush administration are working intentionally to disrupt U.S.-Soviet cooperation on agriculture and in other spheres. He is "particularly upset at what he sees as our tendency to raise our requirements every time he meets those we have set." For example, even after the Soviets passed an emigration law, credits were not forthcoming and new conditions were set. Gorbachev "clearly expects now not only supportive words, but material support."

On May 25, 1991, Undersecretary of Agriculture Richard Crowder, Assistant Secretary of State Eugene McAllister and I met for 2 ½ hours with President Gorbachev to discuss the results of our study of the food situation and the food distribution system in the [Soviet Union].

Gorbachev was accompanied by Yevgeny Primakov, Deputy Prime Minister Senko, and Stepan Sitarian (nominated, but not yet confirmed, as a deputy prime minister).

USSR. A separate memo outlines our conclusions about the Soviet food distribution system and ways we could cooperate with the Soviets to speed the move toward markets.

In the course of the conversation President Gorbachev expressed deep concerns over the state of US-Soviet relations. These concerns, which are similar in tone, but more extensive, than those he expressed to Ambassador Matlock three weeks ago, were clearly intended for you to hear. I report his remarks without comment.

While the tone of these remarks is serious, Gorbachev looked rested, was in a generally good mood (except at the end when we discussed food credits), and exhibited his usual sense of humor. These are not the remarks of a desperate man; on the contrary, he seems comfortable with his return to a radical course, and with the progress he is making with the republics. But they are the remarks of a man frustrated by what he sees as our reluctance to work with him, and our tendency to "move the goal posts."

President Gorbachev believes you are under tremendous pressure from the right to let him fail. He wondered out loud how genuine our stated desire was to cooperate with the USSR on agriculture, noting that it might better serve the purpose of some—the US if the Soviet Union remained dependent on food imports from the US.

He expressed gratitude that you and Secretary Baker have resisted these pressures and stood by him. But he still wonders whether others in the White House are out to undermine the relationship.

He provided little evidence to support his impressions, but what he did say was illuminating.

- He was stung by our efforts to stop the Soviet-French fiber optic deal. He sees us using COCOM here to hold back our competitors. “If,” Gorbachev said, “you want part of the business, then join up with the French.”
- Our response to his request for grain credits seems to genuinely mystify him. From his point of view, he is living up to the long-term agreement, he pays his bills, and he buys food from American farmers. He particularly needs it now, and we’re balking. He pointed out that this is the only major economic tie we have, and now we’re threatening to cut even that one off.
- He is convinced we asked all US embassies to check up on Soviet food purchases from other countries. He wondered if you were even aware this was happening, or if “other groups” were doing this without your knowledge. Neither Undersecretary Crowder or I know of any such effort and we told him so.

Gorbachev is particularly upset at what he sees as our tendency to raise our requirements every time he meets those we have set. “We adopted the immigration law,” he said, “and now the US finds another obstacle to our cooperation.” Now you say only if “real” reforms are undertaken can we cooperate.

The President bristled at unspecified instances, where he feels like we have told him what to do. “We did not complain when you choose that well known anti-Soviet Robert Gates to head the CIA, although it hardly pleased us.”

President Gorbachev was clearly not expecting full responses to these remarks. Indeed at one point he looked at me and said he was saying these things so that “the President’s special assistant” could hear them first hand. I did point out to him that he had Bob Gates wrong, to which he responded with a smile, “fine, I have my opinion of Robert Gates, you have your opinion of Kryuchkov.”

I also used my own appointment as evidence that you were quite serious about supporting *perestroika*, noting that I had worked for years with some of his advisers in their efforts to devise a successful reform package. He took all that in without comment.

Gorbachev emphasized on several occasions during the 2 ½ hours that it was necessary to preserve the “choice we have made” in the US-Soviet relationship. He said he would fight to save the relationship even if you would not. He believes he is moving as quickly as is prudent to create a market economy, and that

we should not be so sure we understand his society that we can tell him how rapidly he should move to the new system.

He assured us the USSR is ready for further integration into the world economy, and indeed eager for it. It is, Gorbachev feels, as much in our interest as it is his that the effort succeed. He clearly expects now not only supportive words, but material support.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2011-0412-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 126: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 4:30 p.m. – 4:49 p.m.

May 27, 1991

Bush calls his Soviet counterpart to urge him to move ahead on the START and CFE treaties, repeatedly making resolution of the last remaining differences on both documents a precondition for the summit in Moscow: “I hope we can solve CFE and START and that I can then come to Moscow. That would be a historic step and I very much want to come to Moscow. Mikhail, I really want to come there.” At this time, the Soviet military is backtracking on CFE and moving equipment from the European part of the Soviet Union to the Urals in order to avoid limits agreed to in November 1990. Gorbachev raises the issue of economic assistance and Bush promises to discuss it with his envoys, Yevgeny Primakov and Grigory Yavlinsky, during their upcoming trip to Washington. He also says he will “do whatever is possible to get over the limits” of agricultural credits—music to Gorbachev’s ears.

President Gorbachev: Hello, Mr. President.

The President: Mikhail, how are you? I am calling to say that I really would like to go to a summit if we can reach an agreement on CFE and get a START agreement.

President Gorbachev: George, I very cordially greet you. And I would like to say that both of us have a lot of work in Moscow and in Washington. Since we both have a lot of work, I hope there will be good results for both of us. I am pleased we are in touch and working hard. I hope you can hear me well, George (there were phone line difficulties throughout the call).

The President: I am wondering if you have received my letter to you on General Moiseyev’s visit. I know you have so many other things on your mind, and I want you to know I’m with you. I don’t mean to press you on the CFE but I am eager to get past this obstacle. First, I want to reiterate directly what I said in my letter about General Moiseyev. He showed real statesmanship and, I think, has helped prepare a solution. He also impressed me with his commitment to our relationship and to what you stand for.

President Gorbachev: Yes, I received it. The Moiseyev visit was good. I appreciated the attention you gave to it. I hope that in Lisbon Bessmertnykh and Baker will be able to wrap up that work.

The President: Moiseyev is a statesman and I knew that as a military man he had good reasons to say what he did. He described his core problem. He would rather not take 1100 pieces of equipment in the naval infantry, especially another 753 armored vehicles, out of service. As I said in my letter, he had practical military arguments for his view. But the issue transcends this equipment. This CFE problem is an obstacle to the summit.

President Gorbachev: I considered carefully your points. I listened to Moiseyev's report and instructed my people on the basis of your letter to urgently prepare a proposal for Lisbon. I hope they will be able to solve it.

The President: I hope we can solve CFE and START and that I can then come to Moscow. That would be a historic step and I very much want to come to Moscow. Mikhail, I really want to come there.

President Gorbachev: That coincides with what we want. That would be an enormous historical step forward. That is the way it will be and we should assume we must move to complete work on START.

The President: Moiseyev said the differences between us are very narrow and I agree with him.

President Gorbachev: I do too. I think there will be a solution in Lisbon.

The President: By the way, Primakov and Yavlinskiy will be in town this week and we will discuss with them economic issues in general and credit guarantees.

President Gorbachev: I think Primakov will give you a more detailed idea of what I had in mind during our last call. The concept of cooperation at this critical phase in reform and critical passage in our process of change is important.

The President: When Primakov and Yavlinskiy return to Moscow, I am sure they will communicate the results of their meetings.

President Gorbachev: Yes, George, I very much hope we will cooperate at this very important phase in our reform process.

The President: We will discuss with Primakov not only broad issues, but also in particular the credit issue. We are leaning forward and are not stepping away from you. We want to strengthen the general relationship and I do really want to come to Moscow.

President Gorbachev: George, I think we must both be pragmatic and practical and take a long-term view. This is a unique chance which we must not miss. If we do, then I think we will miss quite a lot.

The President: I appreciate your meeting with our agricultural team. I will be talking with them. Brent Scowcroft has talked to them briefly. They have some good ideas you and I could pursue together.

President Gorbachev: They had a good visit and good discussions here. They have some facts and material to analyze and certain conclusions that were interesting for me to hear. I can see you have sent competent and constructive people. Therefore our discussion was meaningful.

The President: Well, I am glad they had a good visit with you. You know Mikhail, as far as credits in general, there are some limits. When it comes to grain in particular, the Soviets will always be good for it. We'll do whatever is possible to get over the limits.

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, yes I am also hopeful. I am pleased to hear what you have just said. You don't know how happy that makes me, especially that last line. (At this point, Gorbachev said but his interpreter did not translate: Can I quote you as having said that?)

The President: We wish you all well. I hope we meet soon in Moscow and have a long discussion because there is a lot to talk about.

President Gorbachev: Yes, I think both of us feel the summit is possible and what is most important, is necessary. I would like to wish you and your family, especially Barbara, the best. Please tell that to Barbara.

The President: Please send my greetings to Raisa and your family. We want to support the relationship. We have to talk again soon and keep up contacts often. I want to say that here I am not playing games. We will do everything we can to support you.

President Gorbachev: I very much appreciate what you have just said and I could repeat the same words and say that to you. Goodbye.

The President: Goodbye. Thanks a million. And let's get that conventional arms treaty thing resolved. I really want to go to Moscow.

(After the President left the line, Gorbachev and his interpreter stayed on the line unsure if the conversation had ended. After asking if it had, Gorbachev asked his interpreter when he could get him a transcript of the conversation. The interpreter said he would do so at 8:00 a.m. May 28. Gorbachev then said he thought it had been a very interesting call, full of substantial content.)

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library.*]

Document No. 127: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

June 19, 1991

This “eyes only” letter raises once again (see Document 122) the very sensitive subject both sides have tried to keep from public and congressional attention—the Soviet military biological weapons program. The president informs Gorbachev that the congressional leadership has now been briefed on the subject and expects him to take concrete steps to show compliance with the 1969 Biological Weapons Convention. Gorbachev tried to address the issue within the Soviet leadership starting in 1986, but his efforts met with resistance and obfuscation on the part of the military and civilian bureaucracies. Soviet experts were convinced the United States also had a secret program and insisted on full reciprocity of inspections. In this letter, Bush reiterates earlier U.S. demands that the USSR come clean on its past and present activities and open its facilities to international inspection, or both countries will face a problem of “great dimensions and consequences.” The letter prompts Gorbachev to ask for an official report from his chief military adviser, Marshal Akhromeyev.

Dear Mikhail:

You and I have been able to speak frankly to each other about a number of subjects in the past and have been able to find solutions to difficult problems. You made a decisive step on CFE that has allowed all 22 nations to put that matter behind us. The steps I have proposed on START are offered in an earnest effort to reach final agreement as soon as possible on a treaty that we could sign at a summit. Your response to my letter demonstrates your personal commitment to these same goals.

There remains, however, a serious problem that I first raised with you a year ago at the Washington Summit—the Soviet biological weapons program. Prime Minister Thatcher has spoken about this with you as well. And Jim Baker has discussed it with you and with Ministers Shevardnadze and Bessmertnykh several times. Based on Soviet assurances that you no longer had such a program, we deferred briefing our Congress until after the visit to several Soviet facilities earlier in the year by a team of U.S. and U.K. experts. But the visit reinforced rather than diminished our concerns that the Soviet Union has a military biological weapons program whose nature and scope go far beyond any legitimate defensive needs permitted by the biological warfare convention.

In the spirit of frankness and good will that has characterized our communications, I must tell you directly that this is a problem that you must solve before it jeopardizes what we are both trying to achieve in our relationship. Contrary to the claims of Soviet experts, the Soviet Union has a large-scale, offensively-oriented program to develop biological weapons in contravention of an international

treaty. You and I cannot ignore this fact without risking all that we have accomplished and hope to achieve in our steadily improving relationship.

There is only one solution: for the Soviet Union to dismantle this program and provide concrete evidence that it is doing so. Otherwise, we are facing a treaty compliance problem of grave dimensions and consequences. We have done everything possible over the last year to help you solve this problem, but with little apparent progress. With CFE ready for review by our Senate and a START Treaty within reach, this problem now takes on increased urgency.

The Congressional leadership has now been briefed about the Soviet program. With its role in approving arms control agreements and other important legislation that will be key to many other aspects of our cooperation, Congress will not ignore Soviet biological weapons activities. There is a very real chance that the Senate will not ratify either treaty unless and until the Soviet Union begins to dismantle its biological weapons program.

I am willing to take additional steps now if it will help you solve this problem. I am prepared to have my experts meet with yours as soon as possible to discuss in detail our findings at the facilities they have visited thus far and remedial steps that could be taken by the Soviet Union, as summarized in the papers Jim Baker gave to Sasha Bessmertnykh in March. After that meeting of experts, and again in the spirit of helping you resolve this matter, the United States would be willing to host a visit of a Soviet team to U.S. facilities, before U.S. experts conduct additional visits to Soviet facilities of concern. The visits in the United States would demonstrate how biological research can be conducted in full compliance with the treaty. In the meantime, I urge you to waste no time in taking steps to terminate the Soviet biological weapons program.

Please let me know if you are ready to undertake the experts meeting and subsequent visits I have proposed so that we can begin to put this matter behind us.

George Bush

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 128: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the
President: "Meeting on Soviet Economic Issues
and the London Economic Summit"

June 20, 1991

In this memo, National Security Adviser Scowcroft summarizes the main points for discussion at the meeting scheduled for the next day to discuss Soviet economic issues and the upcoming London economic summit. One of the main topics is "whether or not the U.S. should prepare a more ambitious strategy for the London summit that promises Western support for Soviet adherence to and implementation of a truly wide-ranging economic reform program." Just recently, Harvard scholar Graham Allison and leading Soviet economist Grigory Yavlinsky proposed a "Grand Bargain" reform program that would follow all the main liberal guidelines but require major international financial support. The government-sponsored Anti-Crisis plan is seen as unacceptable, but there is not much trust in the Yavlinsky plan either. Scowcroft weighs in on the side of caution. Regarding the London summit, his concern is that Kohl "may well push for substantial financial aid [to the Soviet Union] with no political or economic conditionality, and the French and Italians would likely follow the German lead." The U.S. did not want to be left looking stingy. Knowing that Kohl was about to go to Moscow, Bush called him on June 24 to make sure he was not going to provide excessive commitments to Gorbachev.

I. PURPOSE

In preparation for the London Summit, to review with your key advisors the U.S. approach to Gorbachev's call for Western economic assistance to support internal reform efforts. This meeting should result in decisions on two key issues. First, when and how you should announce the current package of trade and technical assistance measures. Second, whether or not the U.S. should prepare a more ambitious strategy for the London summit that promises Western support for Soviet adherence to and implementation of a truly wide-ranging economic reform program.

II. BACKGROUND

Soviet Economic Reform Debate

The current debate in the USSR on economic reform pits Pavlov and the Anti-Crisis Plan against the just announced Yavlinskiy/Harvard plan. The Anti-Crisis Plan relies on centralized decision making and official decrees to generate the move to a market economy. We told Primakov that this would not work. The

Yavlinskiy plan presents a much more realistic approach on the policy reform side, incorporating the standard policy adjustments required of countries in economic crisis. However, this approach sets unrealistic requirements for Western support of each stage of reform. While some reports indicate that Gorbachev is looking seriously at Yavlinskiy's reform plan, it already faces strong opposition from hardliners, including Prime Minister Pavlov.

Current U.S. Response

Currently, the U.S. response to Soviet calls for aid to further economic reform consists of a *package of measures designed to normalize our economic relationship with the USSR*: (1) sending the trade agreement to the Hill and granting the Soviets MFN; (2) repealing Congressional restrictions on EXIM and OPIC; (3) expanding technical assistance with \$20 million in Congressional funding; (4) special associate status at the IMF and World Bank. We would also include a *new Peace Corps program for the USSR* and special projects on *food distribution, energy and defense conversion*. Secretary Baker announced some of this package on Tuesday in Berlin. There is interagency agreement on all elements of this package, with the exception of the Peace Corps. We have not yet presented Peace Corps for interagency review.

While this package will create a basis for expanded trade and investment, it cannot by itself galvanize a massive Soviet restructuring of its economy. Technical assistance will help particular sectors of the economy, but the payoff will only come in the medium to long term. Nonetheless, the package demonstrates your commitment to improving our bilateral relationship and would be well received by Gorbachev. Were the Soviets to take full advantage of this package, they would receive critically needed advice in restructuring their economy while receiving assistance that would help reduce the need for food and other imports and help promote energy exports.

Issue for Decision: Whether you should announce the entire package, including sending the trade agreement to Congress and granting MFN, in a speech *before* you go to London or wait for the London Summit itself.

I recommend that you announce the package in a speech before London to strengthen your position with Gorbachev and your G-7 colleagues before the meetings.

A Possible Initiative for the Summit

In London, individual G-7 heads will probably come prepared to give Gorbachev a cautious, conditioned response with no promise of large amounts of financial assistance. However, they may find themselves, when face to face with him, inclined to do more. Kohl, for example, may well push for substantial financial aid with no political or economic conditionality, and the French and Italians would likely follow the German lead. The absence of conditionality would

result in wasted resources and do nothing to encourage the transition to a market economy. In these circumstances, you may wish to seize the initiative—and thereby prevent a Summit split on this key issue—by preparing a more ambitious strategy.

Under one possible alternative, the U.S. and G-7 could indicate a willingness to consider mobilizing substantial financial assistance to the USSR if the Soviets work closely with the IMF to design and put into action a far-reaching economic reform program. It is unrealistic to expect the Soviets to produce such a plan themselves. A brief description of one such possible initiative is at Tab C.

Secretary Brady is not necessarily opposed to a more ambitious strategy, and may come to the meeting with some specific ideas of his own. Others may also offer alternatives.

Issue for Decision: Whether or not we should be prepared with a more ambitious response to Gorbachev in London. If so, the NSC, State, Treasury, and OMB should develop such a strategy for your consideration next week. [...]

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-1933-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 129: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 10:00 a.m. – 10:38 a.m.

June 21, 1991

Right after the meeting on Soviet economic issues, Bush receives a phone call from Gorbachev. The day before, Bush tried to call Gorbachev but they were unable to connect. Yeltsin had been in Washington, and Gorbachev was eager to hear about his rival's visit—and to brief Bush on the progress of Soviet economic reform. Bush comments on Yeltsin's cooperative attitude toward Gorbachev and mentions that he "made it very clear [to Yeltsin] that you are our man. That is my obligation and I am personally pleased to work with you as President of the USSR." Gorbachev thanks Bush for contacting him through Jack Matlock with information about a possible coup against him, but assures the president that "this is 1000 percent impossible." (Almost exactly two months later, the August putsch occurs.) When Gorbachev begins discussing economic reform, Bush expresses his desire to avoid "confrontation over the economic question [at the London summit]. I don't want to be crosswise with our European partners." Bush suggests they talk more before the summit—hoping to lower Gorbachev's expectations for financial aid.

The President: Mikhail, can you hear me?

President Gorbachev: Yes.

The President: Please go ahead. Is this your call or were you returning my call of yesterday?

President Gorbachev: George, I recognized your voice immediately and send you my cordial greetings. I am very sorry that we couldn't talk yesterday. It was the result of some confusion. I feel uncomfortable that we couldn't talk. So, I had to punish some people here for that!

The President: No problem at all. Yeltsin was here and he suggested that we call you. He made statements in support of you, by the way. It was his idea and it was understandable it couldn't be done on short notice.

President Gorbachev: Good. Are you pleased by your meeting with Yeltsin?

The President: Yes I am, more so than in our previous meeting. He came with a big democratic victory. In private meetings and in public he said he was working with you. We worried frankly that there might be a difference so broad between you that we might be in a delicate situation. But as your Ambassador undoubtedly reported, I made it very clear that you are our man. That is my obligation and I am personally pleased to work with you as President of the USSR. I think he understood and I hope your Ambassador reported it that way. I said this inside the meeting as well as outside.

President Gorbachev: Yes, indeed, that is true George.

George, I would like to say on this basis that I have every reason to value your position and you personally. Your association and attitudes help us to pursue this difficult process of reforming our country. I would also like to say that over the years we have created value in the relationship for all of us and that this creates responsibility for us. I particularly value your attitude on practical developments such as finalizing the CFE problem and agreeing to move on START. You responded to my personal appeal on food and found a solution. I wrote to you and found your response to be very satisfactory. And I appreciate it.

Now I am preparing for our meeting in London with the G-7, our collective meeting and for our one on one. I would like to take this opportunity to speak about the current domestic situation. I felt you may have been concerned about the internal situation here and I appreciate that concern.

What is happening here in our political institutions and in public opinion is that Perestroika and reform have reached a stage that we feel we must move faster and more decisively. We have gone far to dismantle the old forms of life and now have to go quickly on 1) economic reform; and 2) on relations between the center and the republics. And the most important fact is that, while six months to a year ago the people were not ready for change, they are now ready and are pushing us forward.

We are currently preparing and implementing major decisions and reforms on property, market infrastructure and the union treaty. There is a new attitude too in favor of cooperation with western countries. The aim is to make that cooperation part of integrating the USSR into the world economy.

What is also very important is that, within our society, I feel there is a desire and an intention for consensus and national accord to cooperate on the difficult problems we have to address in the coming months. I will do my best to make sure that this process is not sidetracked. I will make sure it gains momentum. So in that sense I value highly the recent development in my relations with Boris Yeltsin.

Over the past few days there was an attempt in the Supreme Soviet by a group of reactionary deputies to create problems. I spoke today in the Supreme Soviet and resolved the problem in a decisive way and really got support. And the people against me got a thrashing from the other deputies today. So, George, I think for the time being that is a good enough report to you on events in the USSR. We will soon meet and talk. In the meantime ...

The President: All right. First, that was a very helpful report. I just read an Agence France Presse story on your meeting in the Supreme Soviet. That was a very strong message you gave them. And I wonder whether that had a connection with the message Matlock passed to you yesterday. I would like to explain how that came about.

President Gorbachev: George, I told the Ambassador to reassure him and you that this is 1000 percent impossible.

The President: That's good. I conveyed the message to Yeltsin at the specific request of Popov. And I did so but I wanted you to understand I was not trying to interfere in internal matters. But I felt it was important you be informed.

President Gorbachev: Well, I regarded that as a gesture of concern and trust on your part. I took the occasion to convey the information you needed. Let me say, George, in a direct way that we are in a decisive stage and my assessment is the greater force is on our side. I still understand we have to be concerned by the financial and economic situation of the country. It creates a situation where certain forces try to denigrate and frustrate our process of reform. They may try but they will not succeed.

The President: We talked here this morning, we had a big meeting, on the Economic Summit in London. Frankly, one of the reasons I want to move fast on START is to be able to talk with you about the realities on our side. I would love to have a Camp David-like chat about the economic problems of the USSR and then about our own problems and what we may or may not be able to do.

President Gorbachev: George, but I think we will find time to talk in London.

The President: Yes, no question. I am determined to do so.

President Gorbachev: Yes.

The President: We won't blindside you. But it is very important that the G-7 be seen to be progressing and understanding as opposed to confrontation over the economic question. I don't want to be crosswise with our European partners. So, we are having what we call our "Sherpa" meetings with the other six countries. I would like to suggest that before the G-7 meeting, I will be in touch with you or Baker with Bessmertnykh. We will give you our latest thinking so we don't blindside or embarrass you. And we can give you an idea of what the Europeans are thinking. At the start of the conversation you said you were calling me back. I would welcome your calling anytime and I will feel free to call you if there is anything to report.

President Gorbachev: George, yes, I appreciate this remark and we will talk one or two times.

The President: That sounds good to me. Thank you for the call. The Yeltsin visit has done nothing to embarrass the Center. I think it is coming out that Yeltsin is prepared to work with you. Our concern before the visit was that it would focus on the difficulties between you and Yeltsin. Those fears have been allayed. Read the U.S. press on this. He handled it well and I hope you think that we have. I want to do nothing to undermine you there. In the meantime, we will....

President Gorbachev: Let me say, as I have said recently, that Yeltsin has taken a constructive position. I responded fully and am committed to expand cooperation with him and there are no obstacles. But of course sometimes we are pressed and he is too. He has to stick to this position of cooperation.

The President: Let me tell you that I am going off in a few hours to Camp David to play horseshoes. I hope you have a good restful weekend.

President Gorbachev: Please throw one for me.

The President: You own the Camp David record—the first guy to throw a ringer on his first throw.

President Gorbachev: Is this recorded in the history of Camp David?

The President: Yes, the picture of you is still there.

President Gorbachev: Thank you, George. I think we have had a meaningful talk in the spirit of partnership and friendship. Please give my best to your associates and to Barbara from me and Mrs. Gorbachev.

The President: We will do that. One last word and then I promise I will let you go. This will be the last sentence. It relates to Bob Strauss. When I was Chairman of the Republican party in 1973–74, Strauss was Chairman of the opposition party. He is still a strong Democrat. He is a very constructive individual given this time of economic problems. He is constructive, progressive and I think he will be of help to you if you are interested. He is not a diplomat and doesn't have the language. You will find him engaging and plugged in to the Congress and my Administration. He has my confidence and that of Jim Baker.

President Gorbachev: George, I would like to say that here in the USSR diplomatic and political circles, we have heard all positive feelings about this appointment. He will have my full support and attention as the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow.

The President: Okay, good-bye.

President Gorbachev: I wish you all the best and shake your hand. Good-bye.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 130: Letter from Bush to Gorbachev

Circa Early July 1991

One of Gorbachev's priorities for the summer of 1991 was to be invited to the G-7 summit in London so that he could address key world leaders with an appeal to help Soviet reform and convince them that the program will work. Gorbachev was hoping the USSR could join the IMF and the World Bank as a full member and that his commitment to market reform would yield major international support at the G-7. Bush was initially reluctant to invite Gorbachev to the summit, precisely because it might put Washington on the spot while they were unwilling to commit to providing financial assistance. Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand were the main proponents for inviting Gorbachev. In this letter, written after Bush's conversation with Helmut Kohl on July 8, to which the letter refers, Bush tries to play down Gorbachev's expectations and to channel his requests away from the United States and toward the IMF and World Bank. Bush suggests that Gorbachev apply for associate status, which would give Moscow access to the staff and experience of both organizations, and in turn help the USSR draw up a "comprehensive economic reform program," and "apply methodologies developed in devising programs for other economies." Bush promises technical cooperation on several fronts such as setting up wholesale food markets and advising on defense conversion, but there is no hint of an assurance on financial aid. At the end of the letter, Bush advises Gorbachev not to raise the issue of restructuring or rescheduling of the Soviet national debt (which Soviet experts believe is badly needed) at the London meeting because it is "likely to be seen in the international community as an act of default."

Dear Mikhail:

On the eve of the London meetings I want to outline my thinking on what the G-7 countries, and in particular the U.S., can do to support your efforts to reform the Soviet Union. You and I will have a chance to talk briefly at lunch before the afternoon session, but I thought it might be useful for me to lay out my approach beforehand. Helmut Kohl called and summarized for me the main points of your meeting with him in the Ukraine, and it appears that your thinking about London mirrors ours.

I want to emphasize that my G-7 counterparts and I are united in a desire to see reforms succeed in the Soviet Union. Market reforms and democratization are not just in your interest, but also in the world's best interests. It is for that reason that I and the other G-7 leaders actively support and are prepared to help the reform process in your country.

Although we have an interest in the success of Soviet reforms, we also know that Soviets, not outsiders, will determine the fate of reform. It will be primarily Soviet resources, not imported resources, which will serve as the basis for a

successful turnaround in the economy. At best the industrialized countries can make a difference only if there is a strong, unmistakable, commitment in the USSR for democracy and markets. Even then, as the experience in Eastern Europe is showing us, the road ahead is not easy.

The decisive consideration here, it seems to me, is the clear commitment to a market economy. We in the United States believe in markets and private property because they have assured our prosperity, and we are convinced they will do the same for you. If you are convinced that a market economy is a solution to your problems, then we can help you establish it in the USSR. But if you still feel that a quick move to markets is too risky, and that therefore it is necessary to retain for some period administrative controls along the lines outlined in the Anti-Crisis Program, then it will be more difficult for us to be helpful.

If you are fully committed to market reforms, then I would propose we move forward simultaneously in several areas. First, it is necessary to establish a relationship that will enable you to design a reform program for your country that enjoys international credibility. That is best done by working directly with the IMF and the World Bank, both of which have vast experience in designing such programs, and both of which are familiar with the Soviet economic situation as a result of the study of your economy they undertook last year at the behest of the G-7 leaders. This is the thinking behind my proposal for "Special Associate" status for the USSR at the IMF and the World Bank.

"Special Associate" status would provide immediate access to the experienced staff of these institutions. The relationship would begin with an exchange of data and an intensive review of recent developments and current policies, which we hope would shortly provide the basis for the development of a comprehensive economic reform program. In the process of drawing up the program you would be able to apply methodologies developed in devising programs for other economies. This would help you to identify the key elements of a successful program, including how your own abundant resources could be put to best use to ensure the success of your efforts. You have, it seems to me, significant reserves to draw on in your reform efforts, including a large gold stock, and the possibility to reduce dramatically defense expenditures and foreign aid flows.

The resulting program would testify to an all-out effort on your part to mobilize your own resources to the fullest possible extent. Such a program would enhance international confidence in your approach to dealing with your economic problems, and would greatly assist you in attracting foreign investment and other sources of foreign capital.

If you agree that this makes sense, and the other G-7 leaders support this approach, then the IMF and the World Bank can start to work immediately after London, so that no time is lost. The G-7 leaders would naturally be very interested in this process, and I would certainly want to be helpful to it. Of course the bulk of the work would be done by you and the international institutions.

At the same time that we launch this process, I also want to begin expanding our mutual efforts to make progress in particular sectors where you can show

fairly quick and obvious results. I know how important it is to have some early demonstrations of success.

- Secretary of Agriculture Ed Madigan is following up on the Food Mission I sent in May, and he will soon be coming to you with proposals to bring over a primarily private-sector delegation to help a few key cities set up wholesale food markets on a demonstration basis. Successes here could bring a quick improvement in the food situation.

- We are working with your people to find a good time to [sic] for Deputy Secretary Donald Atwood to bring over some of our leading defense industrialists to explore defense conversion with leaders of your defense-industrial complex. In the meantime, Japan will be sending a team to the Soviet Union this month to start a dialogue on defense conversion. We will have several U.S. officials participating in that team.

- We have sent several missions over this summer to work with government and industry officials in your energy sector to help you devise a strategy for attracting more energy investment. This is an area with significant potential for early hard currency returns.

By moving now to provide you technical assistance in these areas, we can demonstrate early results from reforms, which will be important in sustaining popular support for the entire reform process. In the coming months I will be working with you to find other areas where we can be of help, and I look forward to your ideas on where we can make a difference.

The efforts to make progress in key individual sectors, while separate from the overall process of devising a reform strategy, are at the same time closely linked to that strategy. Privatization of the food distribution system will only be truly successful if the government stands behind an aggressive program to introduce markets which gives the “green light” to locally-based entrepreneurs. Western firms will only invest heavily in Soviet energy when it is clear who owns the energy resources, and how they can get their profits out of any investment they make. Defense conversion will move ahead quickly when Soviet defense firms find there is a real market, promising good profits, for whatever new products they can develop.

One final point. Some of your advisors have suggested that you may wish to raise the issue of debt restructuring or rescheduling at the meeting. Before you take the step of raising this important issue, you should consider the possible repercussions. A formal request for debt rescheduling is likely to be seen in the international community as an act of default. One immediate effect will be to cut the Soviet Union off from international credit. My advice is that you make every effort to avoid such a disruption in your relationship with the international financial community at this critical time. Instead, I believe you should concentrate on working with the IMF and the World Bank on a credible economic reform package that will command support around the world.

Mikhail, I very much look forward to our meeting in London, and to working with you in devising a process supportive of your efforts to reform the Soviet

Union. Your *perestroika* has transformed Soviet politics and foreign policy. I and my G-7 counterparts stand ready to support your efforts over time to bring that same revolutionary transformation to the Soviet economy.

Sincerely,

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 131: Letter from Gorbachev to Bush

July 14, 1991

Before going to the G-7 summit, Gorbachev wants to clear up the delicate issue of bioweapons, discussed furtively at previous meetings. Following Gorbachev's request, Akhromeyev submits a report on the Soviet programs on July 13 that concludes the Soviet Union has not violated the 1972 convention banning such weapons, but that the convention did not draw clear boundaries between prohibited activities and research for defense against similar weapons, nor did it contain a proper verification mechanism. Gorbachev writes to Bush, "I would like to reaffirm that the USSR has no program for developing biological or toxin weapons." He suggests that there should be meetings of experts to exchange opinions "on such issues as the types of activities permitted or prohibited under the Convention, the types and quantities of microbiological or biological agents and toxins, as well as instruments and equipment, permitted for protection purposes." He believes the two sides should work out a verification mechanism for the convention. He also asks Bush to allow a Soviet delegation to visit the relevant U.S. sites.

Unofficial translation

Dear George,

I have carefully studied your letter of June 19, 1991 regarding biological weapons.

We have indeed started a frank dialogue on a broad range of subjects in the course of which we were able to reach a number of important decisions. As a result, it became possible to radically change the contents and the spirit of the relations between our two countries, which had a favourable effect on the overall situation in the world. It is important that we sustain and develop our interaction and remove the remaining problems in the relations between our countries.

I must admit being preoccupied by the fact that questions which both our sides have with regard to compliance with the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons still remain unresolved. I agree with you that this problem should be settled and that everything should be done to make both sides confident that the Convention is being fully complied with.

I am convinced that the course we have embarked upon this year, one of reaching a high-level agreement on exchanging visits to facilities that cause concern, is the right one. Nothing but openness and straightforwardness will help resolve this complex question. It was in this spirit that we arranged a visit by U.S. and British experts to four of our facilities last January. During that visit our guests had unrestricted access to any buildings at the facilities and a possibility to talk with the personnel, they were provided briefings on all questions raised

concerning operation of those facilities, and were allowed to take pictures and to take and remove samples.

With this degree of openness, it is unclear why the U.S. experts concluded upon departure that "the visit has reinforced rather than diminished U.S. concerns". I do not think we should be too receptive to the reasoning of those who have no interest in promoting trust and openness in Soviet-U.S. relations and who opposed such visits from the outset. I would like to reaffirm that the USSR has no program for developing biological or toxin weapons. We expect to receive confirmation that there is no such program in the United States either.

However there is yet another aspect to this question. Regrettably, we still have no agreement as to the boundary between activities permitted by the Convention to defend against such weapons and prohibited activities aimed at their development. Until such criteria exist, suspicions regarding activities limited by the Convention are likely to arise from time to time. To avoid this, it is necessary jointly to develop such objective standards, taking into account the differences in levels of technological development as well as in the history of biological research in our two countries. This is not an easy task, yet unless we resolve it and on this basis subsequently establish a verification mechanism for the Convention, any significant progress in removing mutual concerns will hardly be possible.

A return visit by our experts to U.S. biological facilities whose activities give rise to questions on our part would be an important step towards this goal.

In this connection we welcome your reiteration of readiness to host such a visit after the meeting of experts.

For practical reasons we believe that the meeting of experts should be held in the United States before August 15, to be immediately followed by a return visit by Soviet experts to the U.S. facilities. We suggest holding one more meeting of experts from the two countries to discuss the results of the visit to U.S. facilities. It would be desirable to complete these meetings and visits before the start of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons.

We also would have no objection to having the questions which you mention in your letter addressed at the meeting. It is our view that the experts should also exchange opinions on such issues as the types of activities permitted or prohibited under the Convention, the types and quantities of microbiological or other biological agents and toxins, as well as instruments and equipment, permitted for protection purposes, and obtain U.S. answers to Soviet questions transmitted in Houston in December 1990.

It goes without saying that in order to set the proposed scheme in motion, it is extremely important for the Soviet side to receive, at least three or four weeks in advance of its visit to U.S. facilities, data and materials necessary for the immunization of Soviet experts, as well as information on safety requirements at these facilities in accordance with the guidelines agreed in London.

I hope that this schedule of our further exchanges does take into account the specific proposals contained in your letter and is satisfactory to you. I am

confident that as we proceed along the road of openness and greater mutual trust we will also be able to resolve the problems pertaining to the implementation of the biological convention.

I would like to take this opportunity and express my hope for a good degree of cooperation and interaction between the U.S. and the USSR delegations this September during the Third Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons, whose depositaries are the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom. I think it is necessary to do everything possible for the Conference to help strengthen this important international instrument.

M. GORBACHEV

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0304-F/1 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 132: Memorandum of Conversation,
Gorbachev–Bush, London

July 17, 1991

After meeting in the early morning, Gorbachev and Bush are able to finalize the remaining issues holding up the START Treaty, thus opening the way to their bilateral summit at the end of July. In their lunch conversation before the G-7 session, which Gorbachev is about to address, the Soviet leader makes one last push to convince his U.S. counterpart that a major international aid effort is needed to help the Soviet Union get through its most difficult period. Many times before this conversation, Bush has made it clear to Gorbachev that the U.S. is not willing to commit money, and that he should not raise the issue of financial assistance at the G-7. Exasperated, Gorbachev feels obliged to retort: “it is strange to me to find \$100 billion for regional war, but none to make a [sic] Soviet Union a new country.” Bush suggests again that to increase the chances of American aid the Soviet Union must cut its ties with Cuba and embark on rapid market reform. This record of discussion is heavily excised and it is obvious the summary is incomplete. The Soviet record is much more detailed but, at this writing, not available in full at the Gorbachev Foundation. From the Soviet record, we know that in the brief one-on-one session at the end of this conversation Bush and Gorbachev discussed the super-sensitive issue of biological weapons and, once again, Gorbachev, relying on the recent report from Akhromeyev, denied any violations of the convention. According to Chernyaev, who was present at that part of the meeting, Gorbachev said to Bush: “George, I have figured it out. I can tell you with confidence: we aren’t making biological weapons.”⁴⁶

The President: Welcome. We will talk here, and then at the end talk alone for five minutes or so. We don’t have much time—about an hour.

President Gorbachev: In this day and age that’s a lot.

President Bush: Thank you for sending Bessmertnykh and Moiseyev to meet on START.

[Excised two lines]

President Gorbachev: I am very glad to see you all. We have accomplished a lot. We have, I think, convinced all that we are true to our word. I know you are a very substantive man. That means when you make a decision we can move forward smartly.

[Excised paragraph]

In the Soviet Union we have come a long way toward democracy. Just a short time ago we didn’t have strong support for our approach, but now we do. We

⁴⁶ Chernyaev, *My Six Years*, p. 358.

have also converted military industries, developed cooperatives, leasehold, and privatization. We now have over 1000 commercial banks; 40,000 individual farms. Privatization is on its way. Even defense-related companies are becoming joint-stock companies. We are about to adopt a big package of business related legislation. We have made a final choice and must move fast.

[Excised four lines]

It is strange to me to find \$100 billion for regional war, but none to make a [sic] Soviet Union a new country. We need mutual understanding and reciprocating steps. We will press on and extract ourselves. But we need a new kind of cooperation and understanding you mentioned in your letter. The world is in transition to a new order and needs U.S.-Soviet cooperation.

Sometimes Europeans worry about Soviet-U.S. engagement, but not this time.

Perestroika we need, and will do. But in our transition if we have concurrent effort at critical points.... it's not just money. We have a two-tiered economy, and we need a political push. That is my piece.

President Bush: [Excised two lines] We seek a democratic, market-oriented Soviet Union, integrated into the world economy, having found a resolution of the problems between the center and the republics. The latter is essential for capital flows.

We also seek cooperation on all global issues. I know your historical relations with Iraq and appreciate the bold decision you made on the Gulf.

The last point is philosophical. People ask me, "Who is the enemy?" I want the American people to say that the Soviet Union is not the enemy. I still think I must sell you on that. (The President refers to the map President Gorbachev gave him at Camp David with a blue flag for every American base). To the degree your people feel encircled, and we feel missiles aimed at New York, we fail. So my friend, the point is to reduce the level of suspicion.

One practical problem we see is the modernization of your missiles. That is overridden by what you have done in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

A sixth point is cooperation on regional issues (I don't consider Iraq regional). I mean the Middle East Peace process, Angola, etc. I want that unprecedented kind of cooperation to continue.

We don't seek economic catastrophe in the Soviet Union. What do you mean by a political push? I must look at everything in light of US interests—and your success is one of them. If I have projected something different, I apologize.

President Gorbachev: Then how should we end the G-7 Meeting?

President Bush: You don't yet have a market economy, etc. You need our technical advice to help you integrate into the world economy. You need a political push.

President Gorbachev: And a mechanism to implement it.

President Bush: Yes. I will work with my G-7 colleagues to make it work. The best thing you could do politically is to cut loose of the Baltics, Cuba. I don't have time to discuss others. [Excised paragraphs]

[*President Gorbachev:*] Mayor Popov raised a question with you of an American University in Moscow. Let's work on it.

How about a Summit meeting on July 31 and August 1?

President Bush: How about July 30–31?

[NB: The two presidents then adjourned for a brief one-on-one [Excised rest of paragraph]]

[*Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/ by the National Security Archive.*]

Document No. 133: Memorandum of Conversation, G-7 Meeting
with President Gorbachev, London, 2:20 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

July 17, 1991

As John Major puts it in the opening, this is indeed a “historic meeting—the first of its kind.” Finally, the president of the Soviet Union would be speaking to the elite club of industrialized capitalist nations. At the session Gorbachev presents a detailed outline of his economic reform and describes the “crucial political choice” that arises when transitioning from one system of values to another. His ultimate priority, and his request to the G-7 leaders, is the integration of the USSR into the world economic system. The reform program cannot succeed without such integration, he says. He implores his counterparts: “let me be frank: will you be well-wishers, onlookers, or active supporters? I’ll answer your questions, but [I] want you to answer mine.” At this time, the new Union Treaty is almost complete, with nine republics willing to sign. Gorbachev reaffirms his commitment to repay debts and does not ask for rescheduling: “We accept the rules of the game, but bear great burdens and need solidarity.” Solidarity comes in the form of words from other speakers but there are very few actual commitments to help the Soviet Union out of its predicament. Alone among the speakers, François Mitterrand reminds his colleagues “the USSR needs serious, sensible assistance.” He advises Gorbachev not to move too radically with privatization, but to choose a “middle path,” a “happy synthesis between private enterprise and the role of the state.” He concludes: “This is not the moment to refuse your interest in integrating yourself in our common history.”

Other leaders have more questions for Gorbachev, implying that he should move faster toward a market economy. In his reply, the Soviet leader addressed the pace of reform citing the social factor: “I would like to speed it up, but can’t go any faster. Society could not stand it. ... Economists like Leontief or Galbraith will always say ‘why have a ministry to move to a market.’ But there is no pure, unregulated market economy.” Very soon, Russia will try to move to a pure market economy, but with disastrous results for society. At the end of the session, Chairman Major outlines six ways to help the USSR, which nevertheless fall far short of what Gorbachev is trying to achieve.

Prime Minister Major: We’re all very pleased that President Gorbachev is here. We are among his well-wishers. We’ve all heard that President Bush and President Gorbachev have resolved START. We’re all very pleased. This is an historic meeting—the first of its kind. I’m delighted that it’s taking place. We’ve all studied your letter. We agree with much of what you have to say. We have moved from confrontation. We’re united behind your efforts. We want to integrate you into the world economy. The USSR has immense human and natural resources. There are immense challenges, but limitless opportunities. We accept your personnal [sic] commitment to reform. We hope you’ll talk in detail, not just on the nature of economic reform, but also how it will be implemented...

so we can help you. You can also learn what we can do to help out and our inhibitions.

Our interests: the budget deficit, the money supply, etc.; center-republic relations (including with regard to the deficit and debt); the question of private property—personal property and private ownership of companies. These seem vital to economic reform. The area where we are best equipped to help is technical assistance, know-how, on macroeconomic and microeconomic reform (e.g., energy). The key is to create a climate of confidence to attract increased investment. Your country needs an irreversible reform process. This is for the Soviet people to do, but we will do what we can to help. The international institutions can help; we need to explore this issue with you. I'd like to invite you to share your thoughts.

President Gorbachev: Thank you. I'm pleased to be here with you and all your colleagues. My being here is a symbol of the profound changes which have taken place in international relations. This meeting of state leaders is important. You share a special responsibility because of the role played by your countries. You help shape the world. I understand the real historic context and that this dictates what's possible. But it also dictates the need for a new level of trust. This is a strategic moment. Let me point to some important elements, and also respond to yesterday's Political Declaration.

Enormous gains have been achieved in disarmament and in resolving regional conflicts. There is a real chance for progress, but we must be realistic. Dangers arise from the *transitional* situation in the USSR. This requires special intellectual effort. There is a crucial political choice. We're leaving behind one system of values that regulated relations between states to a new understanding, new methods of achieving security—collective security versus old alliances. There is also instability, both political and economic. We also see how the legitimate desire for national self-determination has negative implications: nationalism, separatism, sometimes with religious overtones. There are dangers to the political environment. A balanced approach is needed; we have a unique responsibility.

Let me share some thoughts on the real dangers that confront us... The inviolability of borders; changing international institutions. The USSR wants to be part of the world economy. There are questions about how to organically incorporate it. We believe it is in our long-term interest to integrate ourselves. We will also renew our federation. This will help us move together, with fewer social costs, and to overcome our distorted economy; perhaps the most distorted economy in the world.

We *expect* reciprocating steps from you. Like lifting legislative barriers; letting the USSR participate in international economic institutions; and a number of other steps. I have long lists on each. We need reciprocating steps. Let me be frank: Will you be well-wishers, onlookers, or *active* supporters? I'll answer your questions, but want you to answer *mine*. We've decided on irreversible moves. But it will be impossible to move to radical reform outside the world market. So integration isn't a self-serving policy, it's a strategic move.

A few words on the economy. We had a dramatic situation late last year and early this year. We had to maneuver between the ultra-radicals and those who would slow down or reverse reform. So we had an acute, critical situation. Even well-tested political leaders broke down under pressure. It was like an earthquake, with the roof shaking over our heads.

Let me tell you: Gorbachev was playing for time to save perestroika. The mechanism of self-preservation was not to suspend change, but to radicalize it. This was reflected in the 9 + 1 process.

We arrested the situation. We got some time to implement anti-crisis measures. But we cannot waste time. Dangers still exist. We must address the transitional problems in the second half of 1991 and in 1992. First, our plan is social accord. Second, to radicalize the economy. Third, to seek new international economic cooperation with the industrialized economies. We did reach accord with the republics. We can debate specific elements, but we need all three of these. Also for the social aspect, there is a growth of support (for reform) from below. Some say this is the most important social change.

I agreed with President Bush. His mission came, with Ed Hewett and others. I talked to them, to Hewett, a Special Assistant to the President who knows the USSR, who said that something unprecedented has happened. New people have emerged. In particular, Moscow has changed, but not the provinces; but now they have, too.

Our reforms began from above; now they have support from the people. Democratic forces are more active. There are new democratic groups—movement is rapid. We have moved toward a new Union Treaty based on federalist principles. Eight of the republics have approved it; Ukraine will decide in September. We're looking for the optimal combination of sovereignty and a new, unified state. Let me emphasize the importance of the referendum, in which a large percentage of the population favored maintaining the Union. There will be no change in the direction of the process underway.

It's important to avoid extremes. Before, the republics had no freedom, no oxygen; it was all unity. Now the hotheads want to move to disintegration. There are adventurists, separatists. We can't put 70 million people out of our borders. We're economically interrelated. All our problems must be tackled together. So we can't separate or divide our Union. But we can redistribute authority and achieve a new balance—a common economic space with unified finances and a central bank. We need a new role for our republics.

President Delors is looking at me very closely because he has many questions. President Kohl, too. I understand this. We need the Union. Take the Yugoslav example. This concerns all of us. It gives us an idea of what could happen if the Union disintegrates. That's why I proposed the referendum; the people supported it. So do 9 republics, with 93% of the people and 97% of the territory of the USSR. The sovereign republics will have broad authority. We will devise a new constitution and then hold elections. There will be new authorities, elected by the people, who have a mandate for reform. This new government will have

new terms of reference. As for the other republics, some will hold their own referenda, e.g., Armenia, Moldova, even Georgia. A large majority are for union. Even their polls show 70–80% in favor of a new union.

The Baltics are a special case. We will rely on a constitutional framework. It's up to them to decide. If they want to separate, we'll have a divorce procedure to figure out the way to do so. This is especially important because there are many Russians there, defense interests, infrastructure, etc. We will do this through a constitutional process without violence. The key is self-determination. We have to respect this.

On economic matters, we've got 13–15 of the republics. This is a multifaceted process. (Others have these problems, too, e.g., Prime Minister Mulroney is tackling the question of Quebec constitutionally.) We'll do it in the same way.

We're radicalizing economic reform. We're in a process of transition, not just declaring our intentions. We're gaining ground, though there are many contradictions. We have legislation on the rights of private property and entrepreneurship. We already have these laws—did you know that? We have come a long way; it's described in the paper on legislation I gave you.

Reform has accelerated over the past six months. There are new, non-state producers, and private initiatives in banking and commodity exchanges. There is debate in the Communist Party about these new sectors. The process also applies to the defense sector. In 1988–90, cooperatives grew by over 200%. These are not collectives, but cooperatives, and they employ 6 million people, with an output of 70 billion rubles. Leaseholders account for 7% of industrial output. Shareholding exists in large enterprises. There are 3,000 joint ventures. Over 47,000 individual firms. 15,000 non-state cooperative banks. Soon we'll adopt anti-monopoly legislation. We need to accelerate more in the next 1–2 years; no more than 2. We're in transition from centralized demand to economic regulation of business. We want to commercialize most of our industry. There is equality and protection of all forms of property. We have laws on foreign investment. There are problems of ruble convertibility. I'll address this later. Step-by-step, we'll liberalize prices. We'll move from a situation which 35% of our prices are unregulated to one in which 70% are unregulated. We're creating a market infrastructure. We need your help above all on defense conversion.

On private property, our legislation permits 100% foreign ownership. Each republic decides on its own. Russia has a communal tradition. The situation is not the same in Central Asia, which is less likely to accept private ownership. Each republic will decide this on its own, probably by referendum. Reselling of leasehold rights is possible if there is interest.

Regarding macroeconomic stabilization: This is not the most important issue. I set out our program, with figures, e.g., those required by international economic institutions. We will go as far as socially acceptable. Neither of us would want to see the process become socially impossible. The deficit is being reduced, to no more than 10% of GNP. It will be covered by bonds and the state banks. We will raise interest rates and will change our tax policy. We will freeze deposits to

use to buy shares. There are some 250 billion rubles in the hands of enterprises. Some ask why isn't Gorbachev cutting military expenditures, when he will solve the question of links with Cuba and Afghanistan. I've tried to tell you about the real process of arms procurement. We've cut 29% since 1988. Procurement of APCs is down by a factor of four. I'll cut more. What we've done already has created social tension. The best brains, etc., are in this sector. Now they're idled. This will add to problems in the Army. Now the Army and the defense industrialists basically support us. We will implement the withdrawal from Germany, including with regard to humanitarian [sic] and economic problems. We will continue the defense conversion process.

New Economic Cooperation: We're responding. We've created better conditions for foreign investment, and recognize the need for this. We're going to make the transition to ruble convertibility. If we do, many of our problems will take care of themselves. Convertibility is under study. Your involvement can consist of some financing, more likely oriented to specific projects. Paying debts—we *will* pay them. We have great potential. With some space, etc., we will earn currency to pay our debts. We accept the rules of the game, but bear great burdens and need solidarity. You have a list of projects, many of which have been developed by your businesses. They want a political signal. We're opening up our defense sector—80% of it, our “holy of holies.” This is important for you to see. We share the burden and the responsibility. To promote cooperation in investment, we'll accept international groups to monitor certain areas.

This brings me to this question: How shall we complete this meeting? We don't have a lot of time. We need to say something. These are not just the USSR's problems. We need to show we can cooperate, what the mechanisms of cooperation are. All of you say, let's discuss. I am looking to President Bush, hoping he'll say something. We need a follow-up mechanism; we need to create one. We need to say something politically, too. There needs to be follow-up. We need an arrangement around the Chairman, and I'll look to the Chairman. I invite your Economic/Finance Ministers to come to Moscow to follow up on this discussion. This is agreed with the republics. All our debts will be repaid. New relations will come and we will establish an Inter-Republican Committee to develop projects for you.

Finally, the USSR is closely linked to Eastern Europe. We've acted badly. Both. We had a bad divorce. We know we have to cooperate with Eastern Europe. We understand the need for this. There are natural links. The sooner we cooperate with you, the sooner we'll cooperate with them. President Havel said to help the USSR is to help us. A clearing system of accounts—Chancellor Kohl is working on this. German unification.... I'd like to thank all. I got carried away. I'll stop.

Prime Minister Major: I'll invite President Bush to speak.

The President: First, I want to note START. This is in the interests of all of us. We're trying to hammer out the details before we get to Moscow. I will go there later this month. This treaty is historic; it's the first sign of a reduction of our

massive stockpiles of strategic weapons. I'm not trying to bring this issue into the G-7, but wanted to note it. It sets a good tone.

I don't have much to say.

As for a follow-on mechanism, each nation has its own bilateral problems to work out. For example, Prime Minister Kaifu has special concerns. You're right about follow-on. We should have the Chairman of this group coordinate common areas with USSR; this is the way to do it. We could also discuss the IFIs, which are important as purely economic coordination mechanisms. As you move toward a market, participation in them will be very important. It gives you world-wide contacts. So I'm enthusiastic about a follow-on mechanism.

Someone, I'm not an expert, can discuss follow-on with the IFIs. The political push will come through the Chairman. We can do without organizations, so they don't compete with existing ones. So the bilateral issues will be considered separately. This leaves nations with special problems the flexibility to move bilaterally.

I'd like to ask a question: Experts raise the question of working out the details of the union treaty. (You are moving in this direction.) It is critical to investment, taxing rules, etc. For example, jurisdiction over offshore platforms, we've found, is very complex. And we've had many years to sort all this out in the United States. But it's critical to attracting investment. It can get you multi-billion dollar energy development; this would overshadow aid. It's the same with food distribution. I've met with our Soviet experts; they all say this is key. Yours was an outstanding presentation. [...]

President Mitterrand: We have no right to doubt expectations. But we have to get over certain doubts. It's the problem of the chicken and the egg: will the USSR establish itself first, or does it need assistance now, recognizing the risk of failure? Consider this question against the background of your actions over the past 5 years. History will remember your actions as extraordinary. We've considered the USSR (as a country) since 1917; since 1924, you've had relations with the satellites. Your perestroika has made it possible to move to a new system, to free many peoples from their recent occupation. German unification was made possible by your policies. So your actions argue for belief. What you have done is a fact; there is hope for the future. There are great problems. Look at Germany. It has emerged as a great power in 50 years, and it has difficulty assimilating five states. What does this say about the USSR, without the same degree of prosperity, unity, with the system of the Czars? It will be much harder. The alternative is upheaval. We can't settle this in an afternoon. All this is the basis for feeling we're taking the right road. The USSR needs serious, sensible assistance. [...]

I wouldn't say privatize everything. I'm of a socialist temperament; this is true of most of us around the table. There is a happy synthesis between private enterprise and the role of the state. This operates in all states. Some don't admit it. It's not for us to tell you what system to have if we have a common basis, e.g., private property. Investors want their profits. Your country needs a middle path to permit external assistance. You need to take stock of what has worked elsewhere.

You have substantial resources and great wealth. But this hasn't always produced added wealth. You have unproductive technology. The distribution system doesn't allow you to get the most out of your resources.

Some of our kings sought wives in Russia. This was not just because they were beautiful, but because of an alliance of interests. In 1492, the first emissary from Moscow reached Florence. This is not the moment to refuse your interest in integrating yourself in our common history. [...]

President Gorbachev: I thank you for the atmosphere. It makes it possible to express our common concerns. Thanks for your remarks on your positions; notwithstanding differences, they cast light on the viewpoints regarding cooperation and on world politics at large. This moves us toward our organic integration.

There seems to be reason to say, if I understand correctly, that there is not just support, but agreement to set up a specific framework. There is the question of the forms of cooperation. All of what we were doing here is necessary for all of us.

The fruitlessness of the command system and state ownership brought us to a state where we can't harness our potential. Logic has driven this home to us. We need the mass of society to understand, and not just at the intellectual level. We need to change our dogma, our psychology, etc., in the Party and everywhere. We are forming new structures, competition, new people in the processes, and new attitudes toward ownership. We need to create confidence in our economy. We're just starting at this, however. We understand the scale, the history, and the burden on society. We're a country of 120 different nationalities. Everything is converging on this moment. We'll travel this path. We appreciate your expressions of support. There won't be any disappointment regarding "new thinking." There is a growing process of mutual understanding. What we need now is a new measure of trust. We want to move into the international economic arena. If we're not admitted into the IMF, the World Bank, GATT and the EBRD, it won't work. We need them to provide oxygen to breathe; we'll fit into the political process. We're talking about mutuality. If I'm going too far, or am too optimistic, then let me know. I hope not.

As for your specific questions. You're interested in business. So are we. There can be no stability without radical reform.

On macroeconomic stability, we understand your approach. Let me respond. The Union Treaty covers all major aspects of foreign policy—with a mechanism. Nuclear power is part of the union's purview, as well as transport, communications and meteorology.

Then there's the broad field of joint response. This includes individual projects where investments might be carried out.

We'll have a single market, a single currency, a central bank, central authority, and federal taxes (among 7 of 9 republics). We're still discussing this with Russia and the Ukraine. Now we're looking at mechanisms. We discussed Hamilton, Bismarck, a range of world experiences. I won't sign the Union Treaty without a federal tax.

I want a strong center and strong republics on the basis of distributed power.

Regarding the convertible ruble: We need this. Without it, we'll be delayed. McDonald's vice president wants to invest rubles, but he needs dollars for investment. At what exchange rate? It's up to 40 rubles to the dollar. The commercial relationship between the ruble and the dollar doesn't correspond to reality. We face great difficulty on this issue. I have files on projects in the pipeline. The stabilization fund is a technical matter; let our experts examine this. We'll get convertibility anyway without this fund, but lack of it would slow us down.

For Prime Minister Mulroney: On price decontrol, we're aiming to decontrol 70% of all prices during 1991–92. This will double the level currently decontrolled. We'll just be keeping 3–4 items controlled. The question is bound up with assessing goals. I'm not saying give us goods. I'm saying for each specific step toward a market, in good time, in sequence, in synchronization.

On the pace of reform: I would like to speed it up, but can't go any faster. Society could not stand it. There are always disputes. Economists like Leontief or Galbraith will always say, "why have a ministry to move to a market." But there is no pure, unregulated market economy. We shall move toward reform of property, monetary reform, and private enterprise—but let society decide. We'll adopt a legislative framework and give (the republics) the freedom to choose.

As for Cuba and Vietnam, our relations have changed radically. We've cut aid to Vietnam three-fold. Aid to Cuba has been halved. We get more from the Cubans than the reverse as of July, e.g., sugar, citrus. Cuba will be gradually integrated into the normal processes. Things are moving. Regarding Vietnam, we helped to introduce big rice producers to the market. Cuba and Vietnam will become normal members of the world community.

It is extremely important to tell the world of our brainstorming; not for applause, but to show the fact and the breakthroughs achieved. I hope the Chairman will work for positive contact. We also need a mechanism.

Prime Minister Major: Let's consider what we'll say in our press conference. There will be huge interest. *We need some message.*

It should be a positive one and will be historic. Let me sketch out my views. I will be brief. I'll stress the frank, substantive nature of our discussions in a cordial, free atmosphere. I'll welcome the START agreement and the positive response it received. Regarding dimension and style, I'll emphasize "across the table" not around the table with set speeches; and the questions and answers. I'll say we agreed to promote Soviet integration into the world economy. And I'll discuss some specifics:

- (1) Special Association with the IMF and the World Bank and the other organizations. I would include mention that this is an enormous step forward, which will bring benefits, expert advice and a wealth of experience.
- (2) Ask the 4 major international institutions (IMF, IBRD, OECD and EBRD) to work closely together, especially on creating a market economy.
- (3) We'll intensify our technical assistance, especially in energy, defense conversion, transport, nuclear safety, and food distribution—both bilaterally and through the international institutions.

- (4) On trade: I should mention the consequences of the collapse of trade with the USSR's neighbors and that we'd like to see trade reestablished. Also more trade access.
- (5) Regarding follow-up, I'd note that this isn't a one-off occasion, but is part of a continuing dialogue. The agreed mechanism would be the Chairman of the G-7—to keep in close touch with the USSR, visit it, and maintain liaison with the others. After the visit, we could report on progress. Chancellor Kohl would do the same. And it would be desirable for Finance Ministers and Small Business Ministers to accept the invitation to visit.

These are six particular ways to follow up. This is the beginning, not the end. It's the first step toward helping the USSR become a full member of the international economic community.

I'd like to request comment, beginning with Gorbachev.

President Gorbachev: I'll be positive. This was an important political discussion among statesmen. We determined certain areas as directions for our cooperation. We've not yet exhausted our cooperation, but are started on it. I'd like to thank you all.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 134: Memorandum from Eagleburger
for the President: "Your Visit to the USSR"

July 25, 1991

On the eve of the president's trip to Moscow, the acting secretary of state advises him on the main issues to be raised during the upcoming summit. Eagleburger describes the fundamental choices the Soviets are facing and states that "the outcome of this internal struggle over the USSR's political and economic fate has become our dominant foreign policy concern, as Soviet behavior abroad has become more cooperative." He makes the important observation that the U.S. model enjoys a powerful appeal right now in Soviet society: "we should seize on [the] widespread popular respect—even envy—of American political democracy and market capitalism." His suggestions are to build on what has already been achieved in resolving Third World conflicts in Angola, Cambodia and Central America, and to pressure the Soviets to end their assistance to Cuba and the Najibullah regime in Afghanistan. Regarding the economic sphere, all he has to offer is technical assistance, and then only if Congress passes "an appropriation of \$15 million for this purpose." If the Soviets present "an ambitious arms control agenda, including further START reductions, SNF, naval arms control, and a comprehensive test ban," the president should address those issues "in a more conceptual way"—meaning without concrete counterproposals.

Your visit to the Soviet Union follows up a successful London Summit, where President Gorbachev received strong backing for his reform efforts and Soviet integration into the world economy. You will arrive in Moscow in a position of unquestioned strength. Gorbachev, and the Soviet people as a whole, very much look to you and to the United States for support in the future and as a model—both to shore up the remnants of their superpower status and as a guide to success.

The Soviet people and their leaders are being increasingly forced to confront some fundamental choices:

- whether finally to abandon the communist command economic system and embrace a democratic, free-market society;
- whether the Baltics, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova should be allowed to become independent; and
- what kind of union will replace the monolith created by the czars and commissars.

The future of the USSR is in the balance. With the Soviet economy in steady decline, the battle lines are drawn between political forces struggling over a broad range of issues: a new Union Treaty, the introduction of genuine market reforms, and independence for the Baltics. The outcome of this internal struggle over the USSR's political and economic fate has become our dominant foreign

policy concern, as Soviet behavior abroad has become more cooperative. While we have only limited influence over the course of change, we can make clear our strong support for market reform and democracy. Your visit can show the Soviet people and their leaders where we stand on the key choices they face.

Thus, your visit presents an unparalleled opportunity to redefine and reinvigorate our relations with an evolving Soviet Union. As the Paris CSCE meeting is generally seen as having sealed the end of the Cold War, this will be the first post-Cold War summit. Signing the START Treaty will symbolize the progress we have made. But perhaps more importantly, it will also symbolize the end of an era when rivalry and the arms race dominated the superpower agenda. In Moscow, you will have the chance to be a catalyst to move our relations into the new era of cooperation of which you have often spoken. The agenda of this new era must be based on shared values and support for freer, more democratic societies; it must be focused on cooperation between our governments in building a more stable, peaceful world.

Much hard work lies ahead to make this transition. The normalization of our economic relationship remains stymied by Soviet inability to create a satisfactory climate and to finalize agreements which will open up new possibilities for trade. In the political sphere, joint cooperation with the Soviets in the Gulf, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America has given real meaning to the concept of "new thinking," but Moscow remains reluctant to move on Afghanistan, Cuba and with Japan. You need to challenge the Soviets to resolve these last remaining vestiges of confrontation and get on with building a more stable international order.

Gorbachev may present an ambitious arms control agenda, including further START reductions, SNF, naval arms control, and a comprehensive test ban. You can address future arms control efforts in a more conceptual way—increased emphasis on non-proliferation (including setting up a new senior-level working group), agreements that build incrementally on START and CFE rather than replace them, and more attention to stabilizing measures. You could specifically propose that the consultations on next steps in START begin this fall in the existing Arms Control Working Group, that we commit to a quick conclusion of Open Skies, that the Soviets remove the impediments to implementation of the bilateral CW destruction agreement, and that the U.S. and USSR work together to complete the CW convention by next spring. Compliance problems with agreements in place, particularly BW and INF, are a big obstacle to all of this, and must be rapidly corrected.

DEMOCRATIZATION, THE MARKET AND THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER

The United States has a clear stake in the outcome of the revolutionary political drama now gripping the Soviet Union. While foreign policy choices force us to focus on key individuals, we must not lose sight of the broad political currents sweeping the Soviet Union. Democratic ideals, nationalism, age-old ethnic divisions and raw competition for political power are among the motivating factors of the key actors on the Soviet political stage.

While not ignoring the lingering suspicions generated by forty years of Cold War, we should seize on widespread popular respect—even envy—of American political democracy and market capitalism. The Soviet Union, its people and its leaders all look to the U.S. as a model for success. Your visit to Moscow will provide you a bully pulpit to speak not simply to the leaders of the Soviet Union, but to all its peoples and give them our message on democracy and free markets.

It is in our interest to see the peaceful end of the Soviet empire as we have known it since 1917—a strong, totalitarian central government able to mobilize the vast human and material resources at its control in the service of global confrontation with the Democratic west. The sine qua non for eliminating this threat is a substantial devolution of economic and political power. As the “Nine-plus-One” agreement suggests, this process is now underway. It deserves our support.

In addition to giving broad rhetorical support to democratization, economic reform and the entrepreneurial spirit, it will be important to press Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders hard on the need to take concrete steps now to open up the Soviet economy. Negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty, a tax treaty and a settlement of pre-1933 claims have continued, but are still far from conclusion. Just as the Soviets need to move on basic economic reforms, they need to create conditions necessary to attract American investment and expertise. You may wish to signal our intention to increase substantially our technical assistance efforts, based on what we hope will be an appropriation of \$15 million for this purpose (passed by the House). Progress in setting up on-going relations with the IMF and World Bank will also help speed reform.

TOWARD A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN WORLD AFFAIRS

We have accomplished a great deal with Moscow over the past year, transforming Soviet adventurism into collaboration to resolve conflicts in Angola, Cambodia and Central America. Cooperation before and during the Gulf War would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. It changed the entire strategic calculus of that conflict, and has helped us in our current cooperative efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference.

Despite this progress, two of the most enduring vestiges of the Cold War and U.S.-Soviet confrontation remain—Cuba and Afghanistan. In addition, “new thinking” has yet to translate into a more flexible Soviet approach on the Northern Territories with Japan. Gorbachev undoubtedly feels constrained politically in his attitude toward these issues, given their symbolic value and their substantial importance for conservatives in the Soviet system. While financial drains alone would argue for curtailing outlays to Cuba and Afghanistan, these problems remain the best examples that Gorbachev is not a free agent; he must calculate carefully lest he open himself to further conservative charges of selling out Soviet interests. You will want to press him again (pushing in particular on Gorbachev’s apparent offer to cut aid to Cuba by two-thirds), reminding him of his own self-interest in getting these issues resolved.

Eduard Shevardnadze recognized that the path of cooperation with the U.S. in the long run promised the Soviets more genuine security—and a continuing role as a major player in the international arena—than the maintenance of both an empire in Eastern Europe and proxy states in the Third World. Criticism for selling out to the West in Eastern Europe and on CFE has made Gorbachev and his advisors particularly careful in engaging us on new projects. In stressing our desire to build a new partnership of international cooperation, you will want to emphasize to Soviet audiences how this cooperation can benefit the Soviet Union. There are a number of particular issues on which we will want to work cooperatively now and in the years ahead, including:

- establishment of a new framework for European security;
- managing ethnic tensions and economic dislocation in Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Soviet cooperation could become particularly important in putting together an effective international response to large-scale violence in Yugoslavia);
- pressing for a Middle East peace conference;
- controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in a number of developing nations; and
- cooperating on other transnational problems, such as the environment.

THE BALTICS

Finally, there is no single issue with more immediate potential to derail U.S.-Soviet relations than Soviet handling of the Baltic states' desire for independence. Despite denials by Gorbachev and Bessmertnykh of any official authorization, intimidation tactics continue, including bombings of Baltic buildings and twenty-five attacks on border posts by the Ministry of Interior black beret troops. Two persons have died and many have been injured in recent months. Negotiations between the three Baltic states and the Soviet government continue at a slow pace. Some Balts believe the Soviets had been stringing them along to avoid antagonizing the West in the run-up to the G-7 summit. It will be important to impress upon Gorbachev in private our own strong support for Baltic aspirations and warn him again of the dangers inherent in the continuing intimidation of the Baltic peoples.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2009-0302-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 135: Record of Main Content of Conversation between Gorbachev and Bush, First Private Meeting, Moscow

July 30, 1991

The first one-on-one conversation of the Moscow summit is entirely devoted to economic reform in the USSR and U.S.-Soviet economic relations. In his memoir, Bush notes that “Gorbachev was marvelous, and how he could stand up to all the pressures against him I simply did not know.” The Soviet leader stayed up all night before Bush arrived, but he felt he achieved a very important result. Gorbachev informs Bush that they have just completed work on the Union Treaty and the late-night meeting he has just held with Yeltsin and Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev on the eve of Bush’s arrival was a success—both Russia and Kazakhstan committed to the early signing. Now the Soviets would move fast on privatization and commercialization of enterprises. Gorbachev talks about the opposition to reform—“especially among the managers of farms, in the military, among party functionaries”—but he believes it is losing ground.

Now that they are meeting one-on-one, Gorbachev decides this is the time to ask for meaningful support, something he could not do at the G-7 meeting: “As per our agreement, I did not speak about this publicly in London, but now I would like to talk to you frankly about it. We expect real support from your side to win the decisive battle for reform.” Bush brings up the issue of Chevron, which was willing to invest a billion dollars but under conditions Soviet experts judged unfavorable to the Soviet Union. Although Bush states that “of course I did not come here to defend Chevron’s interests,” he returns to the issue many times. Gorbachev promises to resolve the problem. For his part, he hopes for Bush’s help in removing certain COCOM restrictions so that, among other benefits, space cooperation between Soviet and U.S. firms can attract the needed investment.

The two presidents discuss Bush’s upcoming visit to Ukraine. Bush gives Gorbachev strong assurances that he will not do anything to support separatism in Kiev: “I want to assure you that during my trip to Kiev, neither I nor any of my accompanying party will allow anything to happen that could aggravate the existing problems or interfere in the questions of when Ukraine will sign the Union Treaty.” In fact, Bush tells Gorbachev, “I would be willing to visit Leningrad instead of Kiev.” He has already refused Landsbergis’s invitation to come to Vilnius. At the end of the conversation, Bush expresses his concern about the upcoming election year, “a time when reality is replaced by rhetoric, when sides in the political struggle exchange blows ... for instance, Senator Jesse Helms or rabid liberals who want to teach you about human rights.”

Gorbachev. Welcome, Mr. President. There is important and necessary work ahead of us. Our continuous contact and regular meetings have created an atmosphere that makes it possible to get to work without lengthy introductions. I don’t know if anyone has calculated the number of meetings, telephone conversations, and letters we have had.

Bush. The more the better! Although the press sometimes jokes that I just love talking on the phone. But I think it is important not to lose touch.

Gorbachev. I agree. Yesterday in an interview with an American journalist, I said that the U.S. president is a solid person with a high sense of responsibility, a person with whom you can do business and move forward even on the most difficult issues.

How should we plan our agenda? Tomorrow we have a “Camp David-style” meeting. We will be in the countryside, in an informal setting; we can talk with our jackets off. I think in the course of this conversation we could talk about how we envision the future, how we intend to continue working to ensure strategic stability, in the broad sense of the word, between our countries and in the world. I sense from our discussions that you are interested in these questions.

Bush. Yes, this is true.

Gorbachev. There is a little time allotted to the meeting with our delegations. During this meeting we could focus on economic cooperation. There are new elements in this sphere.

Our ministers will also do some work. A.A. Bessmertnykh and James Baker already did a good job yesterday.

Mr. President, I would like to return to an idea I expressed at our last lunch meeting in London. I proceed from the assumption that we want to be predictable with respect to each other. This means having predictable policies and an understanding of how we would like to see each other. This question, it seems, is of particular interest to you at a time when our country is experiencing such profound changes.

I understand that the U.S. president wants to have a clear idea of what is going on, which direction the changes are taking, and what can be expected.

Upon my return from London, I told my colleagues about what happened at the meeting, and received their full support, both in Moscow and in the republics. We will continue to unwaveringly follow the chosen path of democratization in our country, including market reforms and movement toward cooperation with all Western countries. In this, our relations with the U.S. and Europe are of particular importance.

We have no illusions, we understand that our transition to a new society that ensures pluralism both in the political sphere and in private property, our transition to a new federation, has not been easy, and will continue to present challenges. But I want to say that we have passed the point of no return. Turning back is impossible. It would be a big mistake to even try to do it, to reverse our path under the pressure of the difficulties we face. At first, the understanding that we need to move forward more radically to democratize our society was mainly in the political circles, in the intelligentsia. Now it is spreading more to the workers, peasants, and all working people. But although they would like the changes and reforms to happen painlessly and without too many difficulties, it has not worked out that way.

We have completed work on the Union Treaty. In saying this I mean the Ukraine. At the referendum this republic was in favor of the Union. Although

there are those who are against it. Nevertheless, the majority—2/3, if not 3/4—are for the preservation of the Union. Now we are discussing when to begin the process of signing the Agreement. It is possible that not everyone will sign it right away, we may start with two-three republics, and then the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine will make the according resolution.

Other important steps will follow. We will adopt a new constitution, on the base of which we will hold a general election—for the president and the Supreme Soviet. We will form new government agencies, which will be significantly reorganized.

Bush. So some republics will sign it first, then Ukraine, and then you will adopt the constitution?

Gorbachev. Yes. And the constitution will be based on the Union Treaty. There are proposals to include the Union Treaty as an integral part of the constitution.

Before the end of the year there will be another important event that was discussed at the recent CC CPSU Plenum. That is the Party Congress, which will adopt the new program. Some very important changes are taking place here as well. Reform is gaining momentum in the party, just as it is in society as a whole. This is important, considering the role the party has played in society for decades.

I came to the conclusion that the time is ripe to propose a democratic and reform-oriented draft of the program. There were some attempts to evade this at the Plenum, to convince members not to accept this draft as the foundation, not to publish it for public comment. But in reality, this line was supported by no more than 13–14 people. So now we have a new draft program that reflects the vision of the future of our society that I described to you.

Bush. In the United States, the prevailing view is that the opposition stems mostly from a small group of the “old guard,” which is apparently dominated by the military men. Is this impression correct?

Gorbachev. I have to say that opposition exists in all layers of society, but it is losing ground. And yet it is there—among the workers, the peasants, and especially among the managers of farms, in the military, among party functionaries, and in some parts of the intelligentsia. The opposition can be quite loud, the more so because some of the media are providing them with a platform. We have to take that into consideration.

However, the cooperation and agreement at the level of leadership of the republics and the Union is gaining momentum. The most difficult months are ahead of us—the remainder of 1991 and 1992. They will be decisive.

It is very important that people are beginning to act independently in politics, in the economy, in the party. This is new. I wrote in my letter to the leaders of the G-7 before London that we have 47,000 farms. Just recently I received the latest statistics. We now have 69,000 such farms. That means that 22,000 new farms were created in one-and-a-half to two months. People are beginning to develop a taste for independent business.

On the other hand, many people still expect the government to take care of everything—from major issues, to the very minor ones. It is a very strong tradition of ours.

We will accelerate the commercialization of the enterprises, privatization, and denationalization. Legislation has already been adopted on these issues; there is movement that gives people the opportunity to work.

But we must take into account previous experience also, including that of Eastern European countries. Look at what the Germans had to deal with in the former GDR. Recently one of my advisers talked with one of the leaders of Saxony. They are also going through privatization and denationalization. The process was slow while the board of trustees—created in the FRG—was dealing with it. Right now they created 12 regional bodies with similar objectives. Privatization has sped up.

We will also implement organizational measures aimed at accelerating this process. Yesterday I spoke with Yeltsin and Nazarbayev, and we agreed to accelerate this movement at the level of the republics.

At the same time, we do not want to repeat the mistake of our predecessors, who forced people into collective farms. We want to give people economic freedom, so that everyone can choose a form of ownership and management. But this process should not proceed spontaneously, we need to direct it, we need to find appropriate organizational forms.

In this regard, we will benefit from working with you, as well as with Western European countries. I am referring to cooperation in the sphere of training cadres, providing consultative and technical assistance, aiding the creation of a market infrastructure. Right now this process is developing and we are going to create a special agency to coordinate this work from our side.

We see that our people are realizing their potential very quickly as they get drawn into the work of joint ventures. One such promising start-up is a joint venture between Fiat Automobiles and our VAZ [Volga Automobile Plant] automobiles. If I am not mistaken, half or even more percent of the shares will be owned by Fiat. They have a long-standing relationship so it will be easier for them to find common ground.

Bush. Do you know [Gianni] Agnelli?

Gorbachev. I met him.

We understand that we have to move faster to create favorable conditions for Western businesses, which would bring competitiveness, technology, and technical and market experience. This is an important incentive.

There were, however, some speeches at a recent Plenum that again derided us for private property and talked about capitalism and socialism. But Professor Denisov, a USSR People's Deputy from Leningrad, spoke up and said that it is time to stop these foolish speeches and start creating a socially-oriented market. People must have the motivation and incentive to work. As for exploitation, it can happen both in state-owned and private enterprises.

Without *glasnost* we could not have had such diversity of opinion, and now political pluralism as well. In the beginning of *perestroika* we saw that the

political structure was not receptive to reforms. Now the situation is changing. Although sometimes *glasnost* is taken to such an extreme that I don't know how to keep it balanced. I think only through a democratic and legal platform. And we have to keep moving forward. I believe that society will then begin having different responses; we will have new songs, so to speak. Thus, in the coming months we have three main tasks: to complete the Union Treaty, to stabilize our finances, and to work actively on denationalization and privatization.

Yesterday, I was discussing one idea with Yeltsin and Nazarbayev. After signing the Union Treaty, we may want to take some time before adopting a new constitution and holding elections. That is, we would hold the elections after a period of stabilization has passed, when the situation will be more favorable. We must be strategic. If we hold the elections in the most critical moment of reform, the conservatives may take advantage of the difficulties to blame everything on the reformers. Then the conservatives would claim that they embody common sense and deserve support. And indeed, they could receive a part of the vote. So we have to calculate everything carefully. We are thinking about this.

The second conclusion is that we need to be more decisive about reforms, we need to implement them more quickly. What do we need for this?

As per our agreement, I did not speak about this publicly in London, but right now I would like to talk to you frankly about it. We expect real support from your side to win this decisive battle for reform.

Bush. What kind of real support do you have in mind?

Gorbachev. When we commence price deregulation, we would like to get some support for this major step at the appropriate, precisely calculated moment. We would need goods, food, and medicine. Then, of course, there is the issue of the ruble's convertibility. The finance ministers should discuss this question. Tomorrow we are receiving the British chancellor Norman Lamont. We need a carefully calculated, planned and jointly coordinated action.

Of course, we ourselves have great potential to increase production of consumer goods through the modernization of our industries. We have a packet of large-scale projects. I think we could discuss more concretely such questions as foodstuffs, money conversion, and energy when your teams of experts arrive. I like your idea about these teams, and I gave orders to prepare specific proposals by the time they arrive.

Thus, soon we will be taking some very important, even dramatic steps. I repeat, this is the decisive period. This is the glimpse at our internal situation that I wanted to give you.

Bush. What you said is very interesting and useful for my understanding of the situation. Allow me to make some general remarks.

I got the impression that some people here believe that there are substantial forces in the United States that are seeking to achieve the collapse of the Soviet Union, or at least its economic collapse. It is true that in my own party there are some people on the far right who claim that this would serve our interests. And on the left we have liberal democrats who attack you on human rights issues,

they think that we should take advantage of the difficult period the Soviet Union is going through in order to impose something on it from the outside.

When it seemed that Gorbachev and Yeltsin were going at each other, that there could be no reconciliation between them, some people in the U.S. argued that we should bet everything on Yeltsin. But the administration never shared these views, and neither did the American people.

I do not know what I need to do to convince the public in the Soviet Union and in Europe that our policy, our choice is to support you.

Gorbachev. I want to say that our people know your position. We know that you support reform in our country, that you support the president of the USSR. But we do hear the things you just described. We know that there are critics who say that you should take advantage of the Soviet Union's difficulties. And some people here think that that is precisely what the United States is doing. But I constantly publicly defend the progress in our relationship.

Bush. I noticed that.

At one point, Secretary of State Baker and I were criticized for supposedly hesitating in our relations with the Soviet Union, for being too careful and not taking advantage of new opportunities. But then the press reversed its position and began to write that Bush is too fond of Gorbachev, almost like Thatcher. I think that we cannot allow the media to influence such an important relationship—the relationship between our two countries.

Gorbachev. That is a very important phrase.

Bush. We are far from happy about your economic difficulties. Some Europeans, our friends and allies with whom we consult, consider that we really are too slow, that we are not sufficiently active.

Gorbachev. Yesterday, Peter Jennings tried to get me to say that President Bush is stalling in cooperation with the Soviet Union. I replied that I cannot say that. I know the president's position and how much he has done for our relationship. Perhaps, I told him, it is a matter of the decision-making style. And no matter how hard the journalist tried to get me to say some words, I resisted because I know your position.

Bush. You are right. Plus, some Europeans want to hide behind the United States. I am on par with any European in wanting the Soviet reforms to succeed. By the way, I think that we can do even more to help than they can. The scale of our economy is larger; we have more technology, more ingenuity. We can cooperate along the lines of what you described, and we will cooperate.

Now regarding a different issue—the republics. You mentioned Ukraine. I want to assure you that during my trip to Kiev, neither I nor any of my accompanying party will allow anything to happen that could aggravate the existing problems or interfere in the question of when Ukraine will sign the Union Treaty.

Gorbachev. Yesterday I told the journalist that naturally we have no objection to your trip to Ukraine, just as I was able to visit Minnesota and California during my trip the United States.

Bush. By the way, most of Minnesota voted against me in the elections.

Gorbachev. I was told that. That is why during my trip there I spent some time with representatives of the Republican Party.

As for Ukraine, the following factor could have played a role. It was reported that shortly before your visit, the Heritage Foundation prepared a report recommending that the president make a visit to Ukraine to encourage separatist sentiments there, because it is strategically important.

Bush. I am not aware of this report. But I hope that you were informed that I emphasized the need for utmost tact in setting the agenda for the visit. I would be willing to visit Leningrad instead of Kiev, for example. I would like to visit one of your cities. But in no way do I intend to support separatism. Kiev was included in the program only after your minister of foreign affairs said that you are completely satisfied with this choice.

Of course we have disagreements over the Baltic region. Landsbergis very much wanted me to stop by Vilnius on my way home. We certainly understood that we should not do that. At the same time, I have to say that, in our opinion, it would be best if you could find a way to cut away these republics, to set them free. It would have a fantastic effect on public opinion. But you know my point of view. This is your affair.

The most important thing is what you just talked about—privatization and economic reform. Let Brady discuss all these issues related to finances and convertibility of the ruble when he comes to Moscow. Let us see what we can do. I think what you told me about work on the Union Treaty and new relations with the republics is encouraging. This is the way to move forward.

I would like to raise one issue as an example, although maybe not the best one. Shortly before my departure, the president of the company Chevron visited the White House and spoke with Brent Scowcroft. He spoke about a billion dollar transaction which, if implemented, would allow the Soviet Union to earn money that could be used to purchase consumer goods, to invest in the energy sector, and to fund the economic changes in the USSR. He said that this deal got caught up in bureaucratic red tape and fell victim to the conflict between the republics and the Center. Suddenly, new committees were set up to study this deal, which had been agreed a long time ago. Of course I did not come here to defend Chevron's interests, but this is an example of a certain kind of problem.

Gorbachev. We discussed this issue yesterday with Nazarbayev. I am in favor of this project. The signal came at the last moment not from the bureaucracy, but from one of the research institutes. I received a letter stating that the conditions of this project are not favorable for the Soviet side. So this is the opinion of professionals. I asked everyone associated with this project to carefully examine it, because I think it is an important project. I hope that we will be able to resolve this problem.

Bush. I feel somewhat uncomfortable talking about a specific company's project. But the fact of the matter is that the successful implementation of such a project would send a great signal to other entrepreneurs. And a hundred such transactions would bring a hundred billion dollars. You would get a surge of similar offers.

Of course, if one of your institutes suddenly raised some issues, it is up to you. But such difficulties create a certain impression in U.S. business circles. And if—I am not talking about this particular project—the Union Treaty would reduce barriers to business, it would be simply amazing.

The Americans are eager to do business with you. They see a huge market and potential opportunities. They believe that it is possible to take advantage of these opportunities without harming the natural resources of the country. If it would be possible to remove the barriers—whether they are coming from research institutes or local authorities who cannot agree with the Center—it would be crucial to the success of your reforms.

Gorbachev. When we make the ruble convertible, it will open many more opportunities. We have adopted federal legislation on foreign investment. It is a good law.

Bush. Do the republics support it?

Gorbachev. Yes. In fact, some republics have supplemented it with their own laws, which create more opportunities for foreign investment.

We used to think that a convertible ruble will come sometime later. And now we came to the conclusion that we have to introduce it sooner. This would solve many problems, and the companies that can take advantage of it will provide an example for the rest.

Bush. I think that deals like the one with Chevron will allow you to reach convertibility faster. They will earn hard currency for you, which is very important. Therefore, you should give an impetus to all those involved in this matter to put some effort into it.

Now, while we are alone, I would like to ask you a delicate question. I am talking about the possibility of issuing bonds under your gold reserves. I understand that everything associated with gold is very sensitive.

Gorbachev. We perform these operations to a certain extent, but not on a large scale. This is not the main thing that can help us on our road to recovery. And frankly, I think that our ability to do so is exaggerated. I believe that we should proceed more boldly with the implementation of practical projects. And while we are speaking in private, so as not to make this too dramatic, I will give you a list of interesting projects that are suspended because of COCOM regulations.

I would like to draw your attention to the project for a trans-Soviet communications line that would span 14,000 kilometers. It would close the global ring. This line would be operated jointly by our Ministry of Communications and the company US WEST. However, the project is on hold because of the ban on the supply of high-speed terminals. One of the sections of this project is supposed to go under Lake Baikal. We are working together with France on this segment. Again, because of one component, the whole project is suspended. President Mitterrand was very surprised by this and promised me to see what he can do.

We know that the United States is interested in working with us on the creation of space carriers. We are also interested, as well as some other countries. Here again we come up against the COCOM ban.

Bush. I will inquire about the details of this issue. It seems the difficulties arise because of possible military applications.

Gorbachev. This is regarding collaboration on the projects “Hotol” and “Ariane 5.” We have achievements and a backlog in the creation of liquid fuel rocket engines that are installed on our large carriers. And we are ready to cooperate with other countries and with you in this sphere.

Bush. I accept your list and I’m ready to see what can be done.

COCOM restrictions cause difficulties not only for the Soviet Union. I do not mean to put you on par, but Iran ran into a similar problem when it recently wanted to buy Airbus aircraft. The company was ready to sell them, but the aircraft uses some technology that is prohibited for export. The deal had to be canceled.

Gorbachev. In this instance, we are ready to share missile technology with you.

Bush. Perhaps in some cases it is the legacy of the Cold War. We will look into it.

Gorbachev. It is an interesting project. You people are interested in it, and thus space could be an example.

Bush. We’ll see, and we ask you to pay attention to some projects that interest American business. I mentioned Chevron only as an example.

Gorbachev. I discussed it with Nazarbayev. He is also unhappy. We have an understanding and we will move this issue forward.

Bush. In my opinion, the deal is beneficial in part because it will earn you hard currency, which can help to solve the food and other problems.

Gorbachev. I would like to ask you something while I am here with you one on one. Is there any way to forego the International Monetary Fund trial period, so we could use its services? This would be important for us; it would allow us to shorten the transition period.

Bush. First of all, we proposed a special associated status not because we wanted to belittle the Soviet Union. The G-7 has no intention of putting you on Burkina Faso’s level.

Gorbachev. It is not a matter of prestige for us. The question is as follows: in the framework of associate membership, can we receive practical assistance in addition to consultative assistance?

Bush. Possibly. It depends on what your understanding of this entails. We were surprised when immediately after the G-7 summit we received your request. Although, of course, you have every right to issue such a request.

Gorbachev. I signed it before London, so the paper was sent.

Bush. I repeat, it all depends on what you have in mind when you talk about practical steps. Perhaps some things can be accelerated regardless of the membership status. But the main point is that before significant loans are made available, certain economic requirements must be fulfilled. And this is not just the American position. It is necessary to provide the requisite information, to follow the “rules of the game” of the World Bank, the IMF, and the Paris Club.

Gorbachev. We could make this available. Let it be called associated membership, it only matters that it is alive and not half-dead.

Bush. I would prefer to see it in a positive light. The special status is not discriminatory. International financial institutions want to assist your reforms.

Gorbachev. When all is said and done, if the bank does not want to grant a loan for economic reasons, then it can refuse at any moment.

Bush. Of course. I think we should continue this discussion at the finance minister level. These are technical questions. The main thing I want to emphasize is that we are not behaving in a discriminatory fashion towards you.

Gorbachev. Okay.

Bush. One more question: if you could wave a magic wand, what would you want from the IMF in terms of involvement in your reforms?

Gorbachev. I think that on the basis of cooperation, perhaps in the framework of a special status, we could discuss problems that the bank could be of particular value in resolving. I am talking about such critical issues as convertibility and the problem of structuring our debt. It would also make it easier for us to work with other countries on major projects, since so much depends on the bank's position.

In general, we want to get out of this transitional phase as quickly as possible in order to open the country up for collaboration, first and foremost for direct links to manufacturers and international investors. Yesterday we discussed this very thoroughly with Yeltsin and Nazarbayev. Precisely two or three republics have the greatest potential for large-scale projects. And they also feel that we must move more quickly to get through this transitional phase.

Bush. Thank you. Your clarifications were helpful.

Gorbachev. Let your people and the Europeans think about it.

We would like to have the opportunity to get on your market and start earning money through several projects. For example, the market for launching satellites is valued at 12–14 billion dollars. We could launch a portion of these satellites, and Western partners are interested. But once again COCOM is in the way. We are prepared to guarantee that we will fulfill all requirements regarding secrecy. The money we will earn could go towards projects in the energy sector, and the distribution of food. I gave an order to prepare our ideas about cooperation, including in the sphere space carriers and satellite launches, in time for the visit to Moscow by the U.S. deputy secretary of defense to discuss convertibility issues. We need a cooperation mechanism that would allow us to make money and pay off our debts to you.

Bush. That is interesting. He reported to me several days ago. In addition, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan is planning to visit you. This is also an important sphere.

Gorbachev. But here we cannot make any money. There is nothing that we can sell to you.

Bush. I mentioned this only because resolving the food distribution issue would allow you to achieve self-sufficiency.

Gorbachev. And, in that way, save money. True. The most important thing, however, is for us to open up the way for large projects. Once one gets going, others will follow.

Bush. I agree. We will very carefully assess your list of projects, taking into consideration the changes that have taken place since you came to power.

Gorbachev. In terms of COCOM, the problem can be surmounted by making individual decisions on concrete issues.

Bush. We will particularly examine those specific sectors where you could earn hard currency.

All the same, one fundamental problem remains. You remember the map with the blue flags you gave me in Helsinki. It hangs in my office at Camp David. Your military men are still apprehensive; they think that the Soviet Union is surrounded on all sides. This belief creates a dangerous situation for us. Both of us continue to modernize our missiles. You know what problems this creates for us in Congress. All of this somehow fails to reflect the new realities we are talking about. I am speaking about this in a general philosophical sense right now: for many years we were taught to hate one another. And now we need to think about how to cooperate in all spheres.

Gorbachev. The vast majority of our people does not want to (and believe that they will not) go to war with the United States. But politicians and military men have to take reality into account, i.e., the fact that our countries maintain such powerful weapons. What can be done? I think that tomorrow we could discuss in a philosophical sense the changing world and our ideas about it. I would like to say a thing or two, and would also like to listen to you. Moreover, we should not only talk about it in a philosophical sense, but also in a practical sense. The situation in the world is changing and it is time to think about where we are, and where we are going.

Bush. In such matters, neither you nor I are entirely free. We have ties to the legacy of recent, and not so recent, history. These are realities you have to reckon with. I think that the contacts between our military men play a certain role in resolving this problem, for example, the trip by General Powell and his reception by General Moiseyev.

Gorbachev. Yes.

George Bush. The position you took on Iraq's aggression, which, I know, was not an easy one for you to take, played a huge positive role.

Yes, let us discuss this tomorrow. It seems to me that many questions still have no practical answers. I understand that COCOM is interfering. But it exists because of former, and in some circles current, apprehensions.

Gorbachev. When you approach the problem from this end, cooperation is even more necessary than when seen from a purely economic point of view. Processes in the world are developing in such a way that cooperation between us is simply essential. This world needs some sort of axis that would make it possible to channel the development of events in a positive direction. Without cooperation between us it would be difficult to do.

Bush. You said that the years 1991–1992 will be a critical period for your internal reforms. I will tell you as a friend: I am afraid of 1992. I spoke about this with Brent [Scowcroft] and several friends. You know it is an election year for us, a time when reality is replaced by rhetoric, when sides in the political struggle exchange blows. I can tell you what kind of mood the Americans are in. They are not afraid. They believe that our relations are better than they were and can be better still. But we have a complex system: in the next year one-third of the Senate will be re-elected, as well as every member of the House of Representatives and the president. In the midst of electoral passions, real positions and disagreements are distorted and exaggerated.

It comes as no surprise to me that Peter Jennings tried to drive a wedge between us. We have republicans, liberals, conservatives. And while everyone recognizes the significance of Soviet-American relations, it is not easy to move the matter forward. Of course, it is not as difficult as it once was, since the American people mostly support *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and our meetings. There are, needless to say, also other voices—for instance, Senator Jesse Helms or rabid liberals who want to teach you about human rights.

Gorbachev. I understand. I am already completely familiar with this system. We have a similar process. I say everywhere: the Americans cannot give us anything on a platter, but it is not a problem for me to defend and advance Soviet-American relations everywhere.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive. Fond 1, Opis 1. Partially published in Gorbachev, Otvechaya na vyzov vremeni*, pp. 281–28, and in *Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 26, forthcoming. Translated by Anna Melyakova and Matthew McGorin.]

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Bush, Expanded Bilateral Meeting, Moscow, 12:55 p.m. – 1:22 p.m.

July 30, 1991

This brief, “expanded bilateral” meeting between Bush and Gorbachev also included President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, Soviet Prime Minister Pavlov, Bessmertnykh, Moiseyev, Matlock, Baker, Scowcroft, and others. Bush and Gorbachev summarize the main points of their one-on-one conversation, stressing the need to cooperate, the importance of associate membership for the USSR in the IMF, the development of special “great” projects that could be arranged jointly by U.S. and Soviet companies, and the commitment to developing relations further. Gorbachev emphasizes that, paradoxically, the Soviet Union wants “to depend more on you—but that is our line.” Bush promises to be forthcoming and underscores their commonality of interests: “We will help. I approach this in terms of what is in the interest of the U.S. But what is good for the U.S. is good for you.”

President Gorbachev: I want to welcome you. I understand we will be having lunch soon.

I am satisfied with the visit. We’ve already talked about a wide range of issues.

First, I want to say that I am prepared to develop relations, and to fill them with a new quality. This is our choice. This is the Soviet leadership line.

We will return to this question tomorrow in the fresh air of Novo Ogarevo to ponder where we stand and act in this situation.

As I said on the eve of the meeting in the U.S., if the relationship becomes weaker, we will defend it. It is important. We have a joint interest in cooperation, in Europe, and elsewhere.

You can act on the assumption that this is our choice. It meets the long-term interests of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Second, Mr. President, I explained the peculiarities of developments in the USSR. I am grateful to you for your interest. I consider it the wish of the President of the United States to understand our reality. I see interest based on a search for ways to cooperate today.

This is not an easy matter. The questions you raised enable me to say our partnership is growing. We are trying to understand each other better.

We also discussed economic cooperation. We want to depend much more on the U.S. in economic terms—not slavishly or out of weakness. We want to develop and build our relationship. We should be predictable for you. When countries are linked by economic cooperation at a certain level, they become more predictable.

It might seem a paradox that we want to depend more on you—but that’s our line.

We discussed in the one-on-one the subject of “great” projects, which can only be done with the participation of the U.S. These are concrete proposals.

We are awaiting those delegations you discuss in your letter [before the London G-7 meeting]. But I remind you, there are [also] some issues of great importance for us: 1.) large projects, and 2.) convertibility. I discussed this with the President, and we agreed to work on it at the expert level.

Also, as I told you in London, it is important that we have cooperation. But we are hampered by restrictions on your part. I would like to return to that topic.

I advanced an idea. We need to earn money to pay back for services we receive from you. We want, for example, machinery for the food industry. We cannot, however, pay you with the additional food we produce. You don’t need more food. The money must come from other sources.

We need to link cooperation in areas such as food production with space research, defense conversion, etc. We could develop liquid hydrogen engines. Your experts like our technology there. Or, we could launch satellites, which is a \$12 billion market.

There are probably other areas. The remnants of the Cold War need to be eliminated.

[Excised paragraph]

President Gorbachev: I ask once again in the presence of the delegation that the President instruct them to consider membership [for the USSR] in the IMF. I have big problems in the next 1–2 years. Call us what you like—“associate members,” “half associate members.” It is important for us to *use* that fund.

So, I express satisfaction with the beginning of our discussions, as we are raising major issues of discussion.

The President: Thank you. I know we are short of time. I would like to offer a few brief comments before lunch.

First, U.S.-Soviet cooperation does not run counter to our interests. What we are talking about with the Soviet Union is in *our* interest.

Second, I agree that the partnership is growing. Your willingness to welcome our administration people—Agriculture and Treasury—is important. They can work out the details, for example, on the IMF and the World Bank.

Third, I am grateful to the military for their hospitality to Colin Powell. That kind of military exchange is useful. It reduces the chance of surprises.

Fourth, on IFI’s, just one word. Associate membership is not an effort to put down the USSR. The Soviet economy is so potentially enormous, and facing enormous problems, that it requires special handling. It could dominate other countries.

We’re talking about exactly what you want, without the burden of full membership. Everyone has the right to apply.

[Excised paragraph]

Sixth, on projects. We’ll look over the specific projects you raised. We can talk later about what we are doing—the trade agreement, MFN, Stevensen and Byrd.

We *will* help. I approach this in terms of what is in the interest of the U.S. But what is good for the U.S. is good for you.

President Gorbachev: I am sure mutual interest will advance our cooperation.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/1 by the National Security Archive. Original in Scowcroft, Brent, Files, Presidential Memcons, Presidential Meetings—Memorandum of Conversations 7/24/91-9/24/91.]

Document No. 137: Memorandum of Conversation,
Gorbachev–Bush–Nazarbayev, Luncheon Meeting,
Moscow, 1:28 p.m. – 2:07 p.m.

July 30, 1991

After an arduous final round of discussions with other republic leaders at Novo-Ogarevo, an estate on the outskirts of Moscow, Gorbachev emerges on July 25 with a landmark agreement on a new Union Treaty. He now wants to engage his republic allies directly in the dialogue with Moscow's American partners. Nazarbayev is Gorbachev's strongest backer in the process and the most promising republic leader who shares the ideals of perestroika. Virtually half of this conversation among the three presidents is taken up with discussion of the stalled Chevron deal (see Document No. 135). Bush repeats his insistence at the morning session that he "is not carrying water for Chevron," yet he makes sure his counterparts are aware that the opportunity represents a "wonderful example of partnership." Nazarbayev expresses some concerns while the Americans clearly indicate they want the deal to go through without further delay. Nazarbayev turns the discussion to the natural riches of Kazakhstan and attempts to impress the U.S. side with the republic's investment prospects. In the second part of the conversation, the leaders congratulate each other on the successful completion of the START Treaty, which they will sign the next day, and which has direct relevance to Kazakhstan—home of the infamous Semipalatinsk test site and location of significant numbers of strategic nuclear weapons.

Secretary Baker: President Nazarbayev, what are the four outstanding issues in the Chevron deal?

President Nazarbayev: The fifteen areas were reduced to four by negotiation. Now there is criticism of this deal because it is supposedly contrary to the interests of the Soviet Union, mainly because profits are too high.

First, the rate of return is 27.9 percent, while Chevron gets 22 percent world-wide.

Second, there is the issue of royalties. President Bush and Secretary Baker know the oil industry—7.5 percent royalties are too low.

Third, the Soviet Union has spent \$850 million developing the Tengiz oil field. The U.S. side owes us 50 percent of that sum. Chevron has agreed to that.

Fourth, this is a rich, complex oil field. In addition to oil, there are by products, for example, one million tons of sulphur, as well as polyethylene. We want Chevron to help us attract other companies to develop those products, since Chevron is clearly reluctant to develop them.

This is a huge deal: twenty-five years, renewable up to forty. Over the first forty years the total revenues will be \$169 billion, from an investment of \$86 billion, with a new profit of \$65 billion.

President Gorbachev: In general, the negotiations are going “normally.” There is nothing insurmountable.

The President: This is very helpful, very interesting. It is difficult to pin profits down to dollars and cents. To a degree, a deal is a deal, and the contract should go forward. Holding to that principle will attract business. They feel that they had a deal, then a committee was formed. I am glad to hear it is on the way to being resolved.

How do we attract capital? When we say there is a deal, then there is a deal.

We’re not lecturing. I don’t have all the answers. Even in our country, businesses have problems with bureaucracy.

President Gorbachev: As the Secretary of State will appreciate: no matter what, we will reach an agreement with the Japanese.

[Excised: a paragraph spoken by President Bush, and two lines spoken by President Nazarbayev]

President Gorbachev: Right. By next meeting, probably there will be no more problems.

President Nazarbayev: I put the deal back on the table after people were afraid it would collapse. The deal is in the national interest. But there was lots of press about it. I decided we needed 40–60 days to finish it up. We called on the services of our experts to make sure all concerns are cleared up.

The President: It is very important to get it down. I am not carrying water for Chevron. But this is a wonderful example of partnership. It would stimulate other deals.

President Nazarbayev: Sure, I know. I met with Johnson and Johnson.

[Excised: two lines spoken by President Gorbachev]

President Nazarbayev: One word with Yeltsin took three hours. “Federal tax.” Finally Yeltsin agreed.

The President: Let’s get rid of communiqués. I’m talking about the G-7 communiqués. This is my proposal for better relations—ban communiqués.

President Gorbachev: We’ve lost communiqués, which has improved the dialogue. But the foreign ministers love communiqués.

Secretary Baker: No, the foreign ministries love communiqués.

The President: I hope you feel as good as we do about work on the [START] treaty.

President Gorbachev: It took ten years. Such work! I knew we had done it done when neither our scientists or experts understood the remaining details. So I said, “...put them aside and sign it.”

The President: I told the experts: “I’ll impose my view on shroud, telemetry, etc.” I looked around and I knew more than they did.

President Gorbachev: Exactly! I’m sure we’ll all benefit from the treaty. Imagine the amount of beer our negotiators consumed.

General Moiseyev: I should have bet Bartholomew during the last meeting. I asked him, “...will there be a summit or not? He had his doubts.”

Under Secretary Bartholomew: I said there would be no summit unless you went farther in your position.

President Gorbachev: I offer a toast to our negotiations.

President Nazarbayev: Why not come by Alma-Ata [sic]? See Baikonor [sic].

The President: There just isn't time.

President Gorbachev: You have a choice of where to go.

The President: We are very free. The problem is time.

President Nazarbayev: I'm sure we'll see you. I hope we'll see Secretary Baker. I'm good friends with Matlock. Matlock promised to hunt.

President Gorbachev: Can Scowcroft hunt with a rifle, or just missiles?

President Nazarbayev: We have all types of climactic zones in Kazakhstan: deserts, mountains, steppe, arid areas. We grow grain.

President Gorbachev: It is a very tough climate. There are nice areas.

President Nazarbayev: We ship ten million tons of grain to other republics. We produce 60–90 percent of non-ferrous metals in the Soviet Union—140 million tons of coal and 26 million tons of oil. We could increase oil output to 100–150 million tons a year, while our needs are only 12 million tons a year.

President Gorbachev: Of course, preservation of the environment should be discussed. There has been lots of mismanagement in agriculture for decades. We are at the very beginning [in addressing environmental issues].

President Nazarbayev: We had considerable oil reserves around the Caspian Sea. We're not poor. U.S. business will find proper conditions.

The President: What are you doing with the sulphur?

President Gorbachev: We buy it. We're importing sulphur now.

Ambassador Komplektov: It belongs to the joint venture. We will collect no taxes for the first five years, then 50 percent of the normal tax for the next five years.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/1 by the National Security Archive. Original in Scowcroft, Brent, *Files, Presidential Memcons, Presidential Meetings—Memorandum of Conversations* 7/24/91-9/24/91.]

Document No. 138: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Yeltsin,
Moscow, 3:55 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

July 30, 1991

This conversation is held at Yeltsin's insistence after he refused to join a previous meeting with other republic leaders. Bush records in his memoir that Yeltsin said he did not want to take part in a "faceless mass audience," and that he clearly expected to be treated as an equal with Gorbachev. During their conversation, Yeltsin thanks Bush for the successful initiation of economic cooperation, which they had agreed to during his visit to Washington in June. He strongly reassures the U.S. president about the Union Treaty and Russia's support for it: "the Union Treaty is no longer a draft—we resolved the final problem yesterday and initialed an agreement—there is no longer any obstacle to going ahead." He also suggests that the United States and Russia can now formalize their relationship, but Bush suggests they do so after the Union Treaty is signed. Unexpectedly for the Americans, Yeltsin ends the session by inviting Russian journalists into the room, turning it into a full-blown media event.

President Yeltsin: Mr. President, welcome to the Kremlin. I would like to introduce you to my team (Yeltsin proceeded to say a few words about each). We covered many issues in our private meeting together. Now I would like to welcome President George Bush and the U.S. delegation to the office of the President of Russia. This is the first time ever in the 1000-year history of Russia that there is a democratically-elected President in the Kremlin. There are two flags in the Kremlin—the Russian flag and the Union flag. This is new and unique.

The President: That is a long time. To those of you who were not with President Yeltsin in Washington, I would like to say that his visit to the U.S. was very good and very helpful. He conducted himself in such a way that led to an improvement in relations between Russia and the U.S.

President Yeltsin: Thank you very much. I would like to say that there have been twenty-eight days since Washington, since we met, and a lot has happened since then. We agreed there to upgrade relations in the following four areas: food storage and processing; management training; defense conversion; and joint transportation projects. I am happy to say that there has been movement in all four of our working groups in these areas. I would like to commend in particular the Department of Commerce for this progress. I would also like you to know that there is no allergy on Gorbachev's part for this program.

In view of the fact that the Union Treaty is no longer a draft—we resolved the final problem yesterday and initialed an agreement—there is no longer any obstacle to going ahead. Russia has no more tax problems. So, I would like to see now movement toward formalizing our contacts. Perhaps at our next meeting, since

today's is too short, we could move to sign a MOU on the four projects and on our contacts and cooperation. This is based on the Union statement, the Union Treaty which says that the Union will coordinate foreign policy of the states of the Union.

I would like to clear up the matter of the tax provision in the Union Treaty. This was not a personal issue or feeling on the part of the President of Russia but a strong feeling on the part of the Parliament. We want control of the budget. We want to know where our taxes are going. We want to see the defense budget reduced in very real terms. We want control of expenditures. You have some budgetary control. We do not.

The President: Is this something that has been resolved by your agreement with the center?

President Yeltsin: No. The treaty reached with Gorbachev was a compromise between the two of us. He removed one line and I initialed that page. So there are no more problems on the tax issue. The treaty calls for a fixed Union tax rate to be agreed upon by the republics.

Secretary Baker: Is this figure agreed upon or is it a figure to be agreed upon?

President Yeltsin: For this year, it is agreed at 23.4 billion rubles. For 1992, it will be a fixed percentage rate.

President Yeltsin: No. We have only agreed to agree on a fixed rate in the future. The rate of taxation will differ from one republic to the next. The center will make an estimate of spending for us.

Now, do I understand that you support my idea of formalizing the basics of our relationship?

The President: Which relationship? Do you mean the U.S. and Russia or yours with the center? I am unclear about what you are asking. We do want to look forward to cooperation with you.

Secretary Baker: President Yeltsin, the answer will depend on what the Union Treaty says about the authority of the republics to enter into agreements with other countries. We will have to see this new Union Treaty.

President Yeltsin: This matter is open for signature; all the Union Treaty problems have been resolved. The Union Treaty will be open for signature in August and states the following formula: sovereign states can pursue their own independent foreign policy, including foreign economic policy, but coordination of their actions internationally will be vested in the Union which will have responsibility for treaties and strategic relationships. But the specifics of the relationship will be channeled through the republics. This is the way it will be.

The President: Please give us a copy of the Union agreement. When it is finally worked out, we will study it and work within it but not ahead of it. I don't want to plough new ground.

President Yeltsin: I understand. I would not want to hand over an initialed version but will give you a copy when it is final.

The President: In the meantime, please continue your contacts with the Secretaries of Commerce, Treasury and Agriculture. These will be important contacts in the meantime. Well, the Ambassador tells me we are being kicked out.

President Yeltsin: We are not kicking you out, protocol is doing that.

The President: Well, you look very fit. You look good.

President Yeltsin: I play tennis daily.

The President: The Russians have some good tennis players.

President Yeltsin: Yes, Chesnakov, Andrei Chesnakov is very good.

Prime Minister Silayev: I played tennis with your brother and beat him!

The President: Which brother? I have three brothers.

Prime Minister Silayev: I can't remember his name, it was the younger one, I think.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/1 by the National Security Archive. Original in Scowcroft, Brent, *Files, Presidential Memcons, Presidential Meetings—Memorandum of Conversations* 7/24/91-9/24/91.]

Document No. 139: Record of the Main Content of Conversation between Bush and Gorbachev, Novo-Ogarevo

July 31, 1991

This session is fascinating in several respects. In retrospect, the disjuncture between how Bush and Gorbachev viewed the importance of the new U.S.-Soviet partnership in international affairs was never so blatant as in their later recollections of this particular conversation. In his memoir, Gorbachev describes the meeting as “the star hour of new thinking,” and devotes a full seven pages just to the conversation “on the veranda in Novo-Ogarevo.” But he does not mention that six Lithuanian guards had just been killed by Soviet troops at the Byelorussian border. In the Bush/Scowcroft memoir, the recap covers a full page but focuses on the “Lithuanian incident.”⁴⁷

The conversation is also noteworthy as a significant meeting of the minds, and for reflecting an entirely different quality of discussion compared to most previous Cold War summits. The two leaders offer a tour d’horizon of global problems in search of joint solutions, even in regions such as the Middle East where they have only recently been locked in a zero-sum contest but are now virtually conspiring together, neither hesitating to criticize their own regional allies. Gorbachev informs Bush that the Soviet Union is ready to recognize Israel at the start of the conference on the Middle East. They also bring up South Africa, where Bush describes Nelson Mandela as “out of touch”; developments in China; and the nuclear aspirations of India and Pakistan.

Among other important remarks, Gorbachev suggests that the two sides discuss a “new concept of strategic stability” that would not be “reduced to military parity, equality, and the military aspect of security.” Bush comments on Yeltsin’s behavior as an “illustration of the challenges you face” and tells Gorbachev: “I want to assure you that from our side we will not take a single step that would complicate your situation. We believe in you and trust your intentions.”

Interestingly, on the issue of chemical weapons, the Soviets are constrained by their new green movement. When Baker suggests that chemical weapons could be destroyed in the Arctic, the environmentally conscious Gorbachev objects: “That would be even worse. Scientists warn us that due to the slow rate of reproduction of biological processes in the Arctic, it is a place where the ecological balance cannot be disturbed under any circumstances.”

In the last part of the conversation, Gorbachev raises an issue that is constantly on his mind—Yugoslavia—and the implications for his own country if the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders is disregarded by the European powers: “even a partial disintegration of Yugoslavia could create a chain reaction that will be worse than a nuclear reaction.” He reminds Bush that “seventy percent of interstate borders in the Soviet Union are in essence not defined.” He then prophetically mentions Ukraine as a possible hot spot, with Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as possible self-determination crises. “The question is: what will be left of Ukraine?”

⁴⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 513.

Novo-Ogarevo, July 31, 1991

Gorbachev. Welcome to these Russian lands, Mr. President. I hope that here, in this setting, we will have a fruitful conversation.

I think we could continue discussing some of the topics outlined yesterday, and then listen to our ministers, who have been discussing some issues in detail.

I would like to continue my thoughts from yesterday. There has been great progress in world politics recently. However, there are still processes which we cannot ignore. Our dialogue, the partnership that is developing, the atmosphere of our contacts—these are all valuable elements that make it possible for us to discuss the most difficult issues. We should see what has paid off, and move forward, developing new approaches.

In particular, I would like to think about a new concept of strategic stability. I think we should consider what to include in this concept. In the past, this concept came down to military parity, equality, and the military aspect of security. I think that now we need a new approach, because a new situation has developed. We are rejecting the stake on military strength and on the arms race, and new processes are emerging in our economic relations.

We cannot fail to notice elements of political and economic instability if we look at the world today; and not just in Europe, where the instability manifests itself most clearly. It should be in our field of vision. Lately, national and sometimes religious elements have come into the picture.

I think it is important that all of us are in favor of stimulating the democratic nature of the ongoing changes. We see that totalitarian and authoritarian regimes are on their way out. I think we brought about this process with our actions, and we want it to continue. The question is how to keep this process in a constitutional and legal framework, how not to allow this process to spill over into turmoil and chaos, which have dangerous consequences. This is one aspect of the reality and its consequences.

Further, Mr. President, I think that we have to see the other aspect of reality—the emergence of new centers in the world. In particular, I am talking about the integration of Europe. This is not only the union of Western Europe. The northern countries are also eager to join this circle, and some Central and Eastern European countries are making attempts to join as well. If we do not connect this to the CSCE process, we will miss a very important phenomenon. The creation of such a center of economic, political, and military power could even create problems for the European process that we are a part of, and which we need.

From this I will move on directly to Africa. You and I have done a great deal of work here. But the question arises: what's next? Among other things I am talking about a country like South Africa. Considering the experience of our relations, we should not allow a situation to arise in which you are doing one thing, and we are doing something completely different.

I think we should keep such factors as China and India in our field of vision. Together they hold 2 billion people. These two countries have ambitious national

plans. I do not want to judge them. They are large and ancient nations that want to break through to a better life.

I believe that so far both of us have acted responsibly regarding China, refusing to “play the card.” And China would not allow it. We want you to be confident that we will not allow actions that would skew the strategic balance. I can assure you that we would welcome the return of your relationship with China back to normal.

I was in China during the student demonstrations of 1989 and found myself, as they say, in hot water.

Bush. Yes, it completely overwhelmed your visit.

Gorbachev. Nevertheless, I remained calm. Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues tried to do the same. It is a pity, of course, the way things worked out with Zhao Ziyang.

Bush. Yes, it affected our relations.

Gorbachev. Soon after that I was in France and gave a speech at the Sorbonne, where thousands of professors and students tried to make me condemn China. They asked difficult questions. I told them that I felt sorry about what happened and that I wanted the situation to normalize as quickly as possible. But at the same time, I said, we are talking about a billion people who are looking for a way to a new life. This cannot be an easy task. And I must say, my response did not cause a negative reaction from the auditorium.

Recently, the CC CPC [Communist Party of China] general secretary Jiang Zemin visited us. He told me about his conversation with Jimmy Carter, who, as a good Christian, started giving him advice on human rights. In response, the Chinese statesman told him that the world should be grateful to the State and government that manages to feed, clothe, and somehow keep in decent order one billion people.

Bush. That’s a pretty good answer.

Gorbachev. And regarding free emigration, he told me: “We will allow it, if you are willing to receive tens and maybe even hundreds of millions of people.”

Why am I reminiscing about this? Because I think that China is a special case for analysis.

In June our representatives took part in a session of ASEAN. This is a symbol of new tendencies in the world. I would like to verify their impressions from the meeting. They felt that a growing number of countries in that region are noticing Japan’s economic expansion. People are even talking about a Japanese economic empire. Moreover, there is a sense that Japan might not be content with only its economic role and will want to become a military power. They say Japan will continue collaborating with the U.S., but will try to use this partnership for its own purposes.

I could say much more. About the problem of resources, water, the environment, demographic processes that could lead to a doubling of the Earth’s population in 30–50 years. The question arises: what role should our countries play, considering these realities, tendencies, and processes? What relations should we build between our two countries?

But first I would like to say that considering the global tendencies we analyzed, I am more and more convinced that we made the right choice when we started the transformation of our society, following the path of reform and organic incorporation into the world economy. My tactical conclusion is this: we have to move toward a more stable state, we have to overcome instability in the economy and in politics.

We made a choice in favor of reform, and no ideological brakes, no dogmas and stereotypes can stop me. Today my main priorities are to solve the issues with our statehood and to move toward a new economy. And I will stimulate public agreement in every possible way.

Perhaps American leaders are our strictest judges in all of this. We understand this. After all, you want to be sure of our intentions, of what we are doing. It seems this confidence has not fully formed yet. Yesterday the president and I had a thorough discussion and I became convinced that the questions of our collaboration and new forms of collaboration, and the desire to understand us better—the Administration is taking all of this seriously. And I appreciate it.

Bush. First of all I would like to emphasize that in the changing world we will be very happy to see a strong, economically sound, and changed Soviet Union.

In this respect, today I have more confidence in your willingness to change than I did before. I trust your intentions and after our conversation yesterday I am more confident than I was before this visit that you know where you want to go, and how to get there. I would like you to be certain that we trust your intentions. We believe that you want to be a strong participant in world politics. In order to do this, you want to carry out reforms within legal bounds and avoiding chaos. We are not worried about this approach; we welcome it.

You started talking about Europe. We may have some difficulties with the Europeans ourselves. Our choice is to strive to maintain our involvement in Europe. You mentioned the CSCE process. We will continue to support it, of course with the participation of the USSR. We are trying to convey to our West European friends that we want to be present at the take-off, not just at landing. This means that we do not want to be put before the fact of some economic initiatives (not only regarding the Soviet Union), without being consulted ahead of time.

With respect to Africa. We would welcome any actions on your part in support of de Klerk. We think that Mandela is out of touch. Partially for this reason, the ANC is lagging behind the democratic reforms taking place in the world. Mandela salutes Gaddafi, Castro, and others; it is impossible to understand. We would welcome any steps that would bring him closer to the reality of the modern world. I will also try to work along these lines. I am confident that de Klerk is following a truly new policy, that he really is ready to dismantle apartheid. In principle I agree with you—the cooperation we began in Namibia, Angola, and other African countries should continue.

I am concerned about the India-Pakistan subcontinent and China. We discussed this with Major—it is difficult to keep this process on an even track.

About China. People in the U.S. still remember with bitterness the events in Tiananmen Square. However, there can be no question of playing the China card. Secondly, we want to have a positive impact on China, I do not want to break off contact with them. As you said, we want to bring our relationship with China back to normal. It was easier for us with Zhao Ziyang. I do not know Jiang Zemin. We would like to raise the level of contacts with China. It was very difficult to uphold the most favored nation status with China; I even had to use the presidential veto. Congress wants to punish China. But I think it is a very important country in the global context.

With respect to India, I would hope that the Soviet Union could use its influence there to a greater extent. India and Pakistan tied a complex knot on the question of nuclear weapons. Of course, the Pakistanis lied to us when they said they were not working on nuclear weapons. However, they are right in one thing: they are offering to conclude an agreement with India to renounce nuclear weapons. But India has the bomb and does not want such an agreement.

Gorbachev. The Indians keep asking us: does Pakistan have the bomb or not according to our data? We tell them that according to our sources Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons yet. But perhaps that information is not entirely accurate.

Bush. We know for sure that Pakistan lied to us. They tried to create nuclear weapons.

Baker. We have long advocated that India, China, the Soviet Union, Pakistan and the United States should come together to discuss the issue of nonproliferation. But India continues to refuse. Maybe you could convince them that a discussion of the problem of stability and nonproliferation would be in their interest.

Gorbachev. I think we will talk with them on some specific issues.

Bush. You mentioned ASEAN and talked about the concern in some parts of Asia about the problem of so-called Japanese imperialism. I think if you could find some way to solve your territorial dispute with Japan, it would guarantee their economic cooperation. By the way, we also have widespread anti-Japanese sentiments in the U.S. But I tell Americans: you should not be worried about Japanese investments, they ultimately benefit us. The difficulty arises because there is not sufficient reciprocity. The Japanese market is not very open. If you could have economic cooperation with them, it would be the best guarantee against military adventurism on their part. But, of course, we will be careful. We do not want the concerns you mentioned to become a reality.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are not at all worried about your intentions; we trust you and hope that we can show it. We understand what kind of difficulties you face. Just one example—Yeltsin's behavior at yesterday's lunch. We don't want to meddle, but last night we talked about it among ourselves. For the Americans it was an illustration of the challenges you face. He always wants to get equal status with you. I want to assure you that from our side we will not take a single step that would complicate your situation. We believe in you and trust your intentions. We want to work with you to reform the Soviet economy.

Gorbachev. I see that we are thinking along the same lines. As the situation develops, we cannot avoid reflecting on it. We have to think about how we will build our relationship, how we will see each other. We have to come to conclusions that should be transformed into real political action. I think today's conversation is useful in this regard.

Now I suggest we listen to our ministers. They have been talking since the day before yesterday and have discussed a wider range of issues.

Baker. I would first like to make a brief comment in relation to the conversation about ASEAN and Japan. I think the concerns some countries have are to a certain extent caused by the legacy of the past. And I would say that in Asia there are concerns not only about Japan, but about China and India as well.

As for your specific question, I do not feel that Japan seeks to play a military role. The relationship between the U.S. and Japan in the sphere of security that developed after the end of World War II is regarded by the ASEAN countries as a very important factor. They see it as a deterrent for Japan. This is comparable to the support many European countries show for the continued presence of American troops in Europe, especially after German unification. I recall that last year you and E.A. Shevardnadze told me about the importance of the presence of U.S. troops. My opinion regarding Japan: it would like to play a greater political role, but not military.

Bush. They would like to play a major role in the U.N.

Baker. Japan wants to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

Gorbachev. After this exchange of opinions I would like to spend some time on issues such as the Middle East in light of the lessons of the crisis in the Persian Gulf, and the prospects of our cooperation in the region. Also our disarmament plans going forward and taking into consideration the need for a real mechanism against the proliferation of weapons and technologies of mass destruction, and limiting the arms trade. We cannot ignore the fact that both your and our industries are growing increasingly interested in selling weapons to third countries. And, finally, we need to discuss the situation in Yugoslavia.

Bessmertnykh. Secretary of State Baker and I focused our discussion on issues such as the resumption of negotiations on strategic arms, the Middle East and other regional issues, and bilateral relations. Additionally, specific questions regarding the next stage of disarmament talks were discussed at the level of our deputies, R. Bartholomew and A.A. Obukhov.

We agreed that if the presidents approve this decision, the negotiations on defense and space will resume on September 30, in accordance with the Soviet-American statement from June 1, 1990. They will be held within the framework of the Geneva Nuclear and Space Arms talks. Deputy ministers confirmed that they will be based on the mandate agreed upon in January, 1985.

We also discussed starting consultations for future talks on Nuclear and Space Arms and strategic stability. If the two presidents agree, these consultations will begin in early October.

Gorbachev. I think we should agree.

Baker. I want to add that we agreed that in the event of the presidents' consent, the consultations will be carried out at the level of Bartholomew-Obukhov.

Bessmertnykh. We also discussed the small issue of the phases of reductions in Soviet heavy ICBMs. The U.S. side asked us to confirm that the statement regarding this contained in the exchange of letters with the USSR minister of foreign affairs is legally binding. We confirmed this.

Gorbachev. I want to ask a question on the first point—about the next phase of negotiations on strategic arms. What about the other members of the nuclear club? After all, the situation is changing right now.

Baker. We intentionally did not discuss this question.

Bessmertnykh. We are still at an early stage right now. I think that later we could discuss this question at the upcoming consultations or at the level of Foreign Ministers.

We discussed some other disarmament questions. We were unable to agree on a date to resume the negotiations on limiting nuclear testing. The Soviet side offered to do it, but the American side prefers to wait and see how the control regime based on the 1974 and 1976 agreements will function.

With regard to the consultations on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, the United States has not yet completed consultations with its NATO allies and cannot give a date for consultations with us.

We discussed the issue of biological weapons, based on the messages exchanged between the presidents. In general, we agreed that a meeting of experts will take place. We would prefer if this happened before August 26th. But if the American side cannot do it earlier, we will have to comply. However, we would like the Soviet group of experts' visit to take place immediately after the meeting.

Bush. I will not repeat what I told the President in London. I just want to emphasize that we attach great importance to the meeting of experts. This issue must be addressed; we are extremely concerned about it. I do not know why we cannot come to an agreement here. Let the experts meet.

Gorbachev. We want to be absolutely honest about this issue, we want complete clarity. It is important that the American experts who visit us this time should be the same ones as last time, so we do not have to explain everything all over again. And secondly: we would like for the American side to set the dates for the Soviet experts' visit to the U.S. We have a general agreement on this, and let us not delay the realization of this agreement.

Bessmertnykh. On the issue of arms control we discussed the possibility of creating two working groups that would conceptually discuss the following issues. Firstly, the issues of deterrence, predictability and stability, not only in the military but also in connection with regional situations and potential conflicts. We could try to clarify the role of the USSR and U.S. I think it is an interesting idea, and if the presidents agree, we could discuss it in detail.

The second working group would deal with non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies.

Gorbachev. I support this.

Baker. I would like to add one thing. We briefly discussed the question of joint efforts to complete the work on the Chemical Weapons Convention next year. The United States made a new proposal on challenge inspections. The Soviet side noted the progress in the position of the U.S. Specifically, we removed the requirement to keep two percent of the stock and the right to a retaliatory strike. There is one issue left—challenge inspections. If we can resolve it, we will be able to agree on a global chemical weapons ban in the spirit of the proposal made a few years ago by George Bush when he was vice president.

There is one problem from the Soviet side. It has to do with the timeframe for the destruction of chemical weapons. You agreed to provide a schedule for the destruction.

Bessmertnykh. We are indeed getting closer to the goal. The United States removed some positions that were making it difficult to move ahead. As for challenge inspections, we advocated that they should be allowed in all cases when necessary. Right now the experts are discussing this issue.

As for the timeframe of the destruction of chemical weapons, the USSR president recently approved what is essentially a national elimination program, and the Cabinet of Ministers is working out specific details of the program right now. I hope that soon we will be able to provide the necessary data; although we really are having great difficulty finding a location for the destruction of the weapons, and potentially with the schedule as well.

Gorbachev. I will add, so that you have an idea of our difficulties. Our democracy is still young, and our “green bloc” was able to close down one thousand three hundred factories for ecological reasons. So, in Yerevan the “Nairit” plant is closed, which was unique in the country.

Baker. Can it be located somewhere in the Arctic?

Gorbachev. That would be even worse. Scientists warn us that due to the slow rate of reproduction of biological processes in the Arctic, it is a place where the ecological balance cannot be disturbed under any circumstances.

Bush. Yes, we also had great difficulty in solving this problem; we located the plant for the destruction of chemical weapons on an atoll in the Pacific.

Baker. Three more questions on arms control. The question of accelerating negotiations on “Open Skies.” After the completion of the Vienna talks and START, we decided to work on a bilateral basis, and, if possible, to create conditions to resume multilateral talks on “Open Skies.”

Also, we would like the Vienna-1A negotiations to be completed by March 1992, i.e., before the Helsinki-2 meeting.

Finally, we stressed that we would like to get a comprehensive letter from you, in which you list all facts and everything concerning your views on the diplomatic line regarding the SS-23 missiles in Eastern Europe. This is a major political issue in the U.S. We know that you presented *démarches* to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and other countries. However, information on these issues is scattered. It would be great if it was collected in one place, so we could present it to the Senate and close this issue, which is currently being used by opponents of arms control.

Gorbachev. All right.

Bessmertnykh. We compared our positions on "Open Skies" and noted that our positions are moving closer to each other. We are preparing a letter that will contain responses to the considerations put forth by NATO. The letter will be sent after the president's approval.

As for the Vienna-1A talks, they are specifically dealing with the question of the number of troops, and we hope that by the Helsinki Conference this stage of the negotiations will be completed.

On the SS-23, we prepared information for the American side and will transfer it in the course of this visit.

Gorbachev. Very well. Let us now discuss the Middle East, if the ministers are not completely confused over this issue yet.

Baker. You know, Abraham Lincoln said that any road is good as long as it ultimately leads you to your goal. The Middle East is a region where we can go beyond basic cooperation and be partners. Both our countries are making great efforts and trying to influence the different sides. Only because of this work we now finally have a chance. Of course, it is only a chance for now and there are many obstacles ahead of us. During my last visit, Prime Minister Shamir, in his usual manner, made it clear that Israel was ready to agree to the approach we are proposing. Knowing the Israelis, I expect that they will add some conditions to their agreement. He will probably say that he has to discuss it with his Cabinet. The question of the Palestinians' representation is not fully decided. Shamir will probably demand some assurances from the United States, so we will have to work on that.

Bush. What kind of assurances? Related to security?

Baker. Not quite. In part, it is a question of representation, in part an assurance that if they support the process, the question will not be advanced to the level of the U.N. Security Council.

In addition, the Palestinians seek assurances from us, as they do from you, that our policies will remain unchanged.

I told the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the Jordanians that we have certain fundamental positions that we do not change. However, each of the sides is essentially asking us to change our position on this or that issue.

The president instructed me to go to Jerusalem tomorrow, where I will try to get a statement from Shamir that he accepts our proposal. It is an extremely difficult task.

Gorbachev. We received a letter from Arafat, he is asking for clarification of the positions on six points.

Baker. Israel is also asking us to make some statements that we cannot make. Faisal Hussain reached out to us, same as he did to you. Each side wants us to guarantee the outcome. But even together, we cannot guarantee the outcome.

Let's see what we can do in Jerusalem. I do not want to predict anything, but maybe something will come of it. We prepared a statement that the two presidents could give here in Moscow.

Gorbachev. I reviewed it. I think it is a fitting document.

Bush. I would like to hear your opinion on Arafat. We think that he backed the wrong horse and really damaged his position after the Iraqi aggression. Nevertheless, we see that he still remains a spokesman for the Palestinians in the Arab world. Do you think his positions will strengthen or weaken?

Bessmertnykh. President Gorbachev instructed me to meet with Arafat in Geneva after my trip to the Middle East. We also have regular contact with the PLO. We know that there are significant differences within the PLO Executive Committee. Arafat's position has weakened somewhat. However, the fact remains that the PLO does not make any decisions without him. So we have to work with him.

Baker. We should go over how you will respond to questions about the Middle East at the press conference.

Gorbachev. I think it would suffice to stick to the prepared statement and not deviate from it.

Baker. The history of the Palestinians is a history of missed opportunities. That was the case in 1948, in 1967, after Camp David. Right now there is a new opportunity. Our task is to bring Israel to the negotiating table. It is very important to have an understanding that at the first stage, when the transitional arrangements will be discussed, there should not be people from East Jerusalem at the table from the Palestinian side. Otherwise there will be no peace process.

Israel's position is to refuse to negotiate with the PLO. Therefore, we have to arrange it so the PLO leadership in Tunis can direct its people behind the scenes, but have only Palestinians from the territories in the delegation. We are developing a fairly sophisticated system of relations that will make it possible for the Palestinians not to feel like they are giving up their claims to East Jerusalem. But if this issue comes to the forefront there will never be peace, there will be no peace process. East Jerusalem has to be the last issue in the negotiations.

When I am asked about Palestinian representatives, I refuse to comment. I only say that the question has to be resolved to the satisfaction of all sides.

Gorbachev. They will try to pry answers out of us on a number of positions. Firstly, on the role of the PLO; secondly, on the Palestinians' self-determination; and thirdly, on the return of Arab territories.

Baker. Let us emphasize that we are cooperating, and we aim to establish a peace process. We will not go into details. The statement speaks for itself.

Gorbachev. Indeed, the main thing is our cooperation. If the process does begin in October, it will be a historic opportunity for a settlement.

Bessmertnykh. We think that the invitation to the peace conference should be sent on behalf of both presidents. We are working on the text of the invitation, which will consist of more than just polite phrases. It will form the basis for the peace conference.

Considering the historic nature of the conference, it would be appropriate for the presidents of the U.S. and USSR to open the conference. As for the venue, Israel prefers Washington, and the Arabs prefer Cairo. It seems that a European city would work as a compromise. We are discussing this issue.

Gorbachev. I think we may remember these days as the beginning of a breakthrough.

Bush. I hope so, but I am still worried about Israel's response. It has not agreed yet.

Gorbachev. For our part, we are ready to establish diplomatic relations with Israel in connection with the conference. You can tell this to the Israelis.

Bush. Before the start of the conference?

Bessmertnykh. Perhaps in conjunction with the start of the conference. We have come a long way in the practical aspect of our relations.

Gorbachev. In general, we are ready. By the way, our people were recently in Israel and said that Russian speech can be heard everywhere in Tel Aviv.

Bush. Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a burning issue. We strongly oppose this. In the past, American Jews fully supported Peres's policy of not building more settlements. However, their position changed under Shamir's influence. Still, I think American Jews are becoming more aware of the harm of the settlement policy. We will try to change Israel's mind, but it is very difficult.

Gorbachev. The Arabs are staunchly criticizing us, too. They are demanding that we put an end to emigration to Israel. When Mubarak was here he warned me that we will make a public statement about it, and he did so at a press conference.

Baker. We will give the Palestinians a number of points, like we gave Assad four points on the role of the UN. As a result, the Palestinians will be able to say that they are not giving up their position on East Jerusalem and will be able to raise the issue at negotiations over the final status. The Palestinians will benefit if they give us enough concessions to allow us to bring Israel to the negotiating table. Just between us, I think that Israel would prefer if this did not happen. Our strategy is to get the Arabs to say yes first, then it will be almost impossible for Israel to say no. Although, who knows.

Bush. The U.S. administration is often criticized for not supporting Israel enough, for not supporting it automatically. We support Israel's legitimate concerns, but we cannot support its every position. We cannot support Israeli radicalism. I think we will be able to withstand the criticism. Many Jews in the U.S. actually feel that the settlements are a mistake. Anyway, what is written in the newspapers ultimately does not harm us. It gives Jim the chance to speak more firmly with Israel. But we cannot guarantee that Israel will listen to us.

Gorbachev. I understand what you are saying.

Baker. I want to stress once again that the Palestinians should not give Israel any excuse to avoid participating. The question of East Jerusalem would give Israel the perfect excuse. We never recognized the annexation of East Jerusalem. But we cannot ignore the fact that 98 percent of Israelis support it. Therefore, this issue should be excluded from public debate.

Gorbachev. What's happening with Yugoslavia?

Bessmertnykh. We tried to put together a short statement on this issue, because everyone is waiting for our word. We have not finished this task yet. The

main issue is as follows. We believe that based on the wording adopted by all the foreign ministers of the CSCE at the meeting in Berlin, the statement should mention the principles of territorial integrity and unity of Yugoslavia. However, the United States has tactical difficulties with this.

Bush. Were you able to bring the positions closer?

Baker. Here is the problem. Because the European Community is playing a leading role in the effort to resolve the situation in Yugoslavia, and we support this, we consulted about this text with the minister of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, since he is the chairman of the EEC. The Dutch are saying that this text would create difficulties. They agree with the first part of the statement, which mentions the necessity of negotiations and a constructive dialogue. However, the specific mention of territorial integrity and unity, even though it is in the Berlin statement, would be problematic. There is disagreement within the EC about the tactical approach in this matter. In particular, this is the disagreement between Germany and other EC countries, which they do not want to aggravate.

Bush. Indeed, Germany came forward with the recognition of Slovenia. Maybe we really should opt for a short statement consisting of two-three declarations. We could note our concern about the events in Yugoslavia, call on everyone to respect the ceasefire, and condemn the use of force to deal with political problems. Let the Yugoslavs decide their own fate through negotiations.

Bessmertnykh. We have a joint position in support of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. The question is whether to mention it in this statement. It is a question of tactics.

Baker. The Berlin statement mentioned more than just territorial integrity. We are in favor of a peaceful settlement; we are against unilateral actions that would anticipate the results of the settlement. Perhaps the presidents could voice their support for the Berlin statement, but we should avoid loaded wording like territorial integrity and self-determination. Self-determination is what the Germans are insisting on.

We do not disagree in principle. There are positions on which we are united. We are not departing from the Berlin statement. But we do not want to create difficulties for the EC.

Gorbachev. I will speak on the essence of this issue. Before the start of this conversation, when the President was walking toward the building, Mr. Scowcroft and I had a conversation. I told him that even a partial breakup of Yugoslavia could create a chain reaction that will be worse than a nuclear reaction. That is why this is a decisive moment.

If I started listing the potential territorial problems that would arise in that situation, I would not have enough fingers on my hands to count them, in fact, all the fingers in this room would not be enough. Seventy percent of interstate borders in the Soviet Union are in essence not defined. Nobody worked on it before; everything was solved on a routine basis, almost at the regional soviet levels.

When the prime minister of Greece Mitsotakis was here, I jokingly asked him whether Greece has any claims on Central Asia, since Alexander the Great reached it in his day.

Just a couple of weeks after Lithuania adopted the Act of Restoration of Independence and recognized the entry into the USSR as illegal, Byelorussia raised the question about returning its territories, which were given to Lithuania when it entered the Soviet Union. This includes the Vilnius region, where 40 percent of the population are Polish-speaking, and where there are many Russians.

Klaipeda belonged to Russia for 500 years. After the war, Stalin gave it to Lithuania at Sniečkus' request. There is a dispute about this territory as well. But then what will be left of Lithuania after it separates?

When Moldovans started talking about joining Romania, the population of one-third of its territory immediately objected, they do not want to leave.

The same is true in Ukraine. When western Ukraine started talking about independence, Crimea announced that if this happens it would go to Russia. Moreover, Crimea was declared itself autonomous as the result. And residents of the Donets Basin remembered that after the Revolution, a Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic was created there. So they said they may want to restore it. Hungary's claims to Ukrainian territories also came up. The question is: what will be left of Ukraine?

That's how sensitive this subject is. I promise you that tomorrow there will be talk of Poland's western territories, about Transylvania, Macedonia. About a million Turks live in Bulgaria.

In a word, if we do not keep the issue of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders under control, chaos will break out from which we will never extricate ourselves.

When shortly before London I discussed this question with Kohl, he asked me what to do about the principle of self-determination of minorities if we insist on territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. I told him that I do not see a contradiction here, but the process has to take place within a constitutional and legal framework.

This is my position on the Baltic States as well. There is such a web of territorial, economic, national, political, and security interests that the only solution is the constitutional process. For us it is a matter of principle.

So I would ask you to find wording that would make it clear that these principles remain in force for us.

Bush. Yes, we should think about how to factor this in.

Baker. I would like to read an excerpt from a telegram from our embassy in the Netherlands. Van den Broek believes that we will undermine efforts to bring Slovenia and Croatia into the settlement process if we stress the principles of territorial integrity and unity, because they believe it would predetermine the outcome of the process. The reference to the Berlin declaration creates a special problem for the "12." They do not depart from that statement. However, the Germans want to balance it with a reference to the Paris Charter, which mentions

self-determination. Preserving the unity of the EC is crucial in order for it to be able to play a constructive role. The situation is difficult enough as it is.

Gorbachev. I think we should at least make a reference to the principles of the CSCE. Let us still try to make a statement. We will work on the wording.

Bush. I think we are close to an agreement. I would ask you to revise the text in light of this discussion and show it to us.

[Source: Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, opis 1. Partially published in Gorbachev, Otvechaya na vyzov vremeni, pp. 284–287, and in Gorbachev, Sobranie sochinenii, v. 27, forthcoming. Translated by Anna Melyakova.]

Document No. 140: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Kravchuk, Kiev, 1:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

August 1, 1991

This very brief meeting with the Ukrainian leader (30 minutes including translations) presents many of the most pressing dynamics in U.S.-Soviet relations at this critical juncture—just three weeks before the attempted coup in Moscow. In the room is one of the coup leaders-to-be, Gorbachev's own vice president, Gennady Yanayev; but the atmospherics are full of the kind of independent thinking, here by the Ukrainians, that would—before the end of the year—break up the USSR. The Americans in the room have not yet seen the U.S. domestic reaction to the president's recent speech, in which he cautioned Ukrainians: "Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred."⁴⁸ Within hours, the phrase "Chicken Kiev," coined by New York Times columnist William Safire, would dominate conventional wisdom about the speech, yet in the context of the disintegration of Yugoslavia then taking place, Bush's choice of language probably deserves more credit. Here, he simply comments: "I want to deal respectfully with the center" and responds to the Ukrainian request for "most favored nation" status by saying "we are already doing MFN which covers all of the USSR, so you will benefit from that."

The President: I was very moved by the welcome of all those people along the route as was every other American with me coming into Kiev today.

Chairman Kravchuk: Mr. President, welcome to Kiev, welcome to Marinskiy Palace. First, I want to say to everyone here that I am very satisfied by my talks with the President in the car and in our meeting. I was also satisfied by your comments on many issues. I hope you and your party have felt that the Ukrainian people deeply respect the American people and your policies by this welcome. I also hope, Mr. President, that you will understand the aspirations of Ukraine for cooperation in different fields. We believe friendship and cooperation are very important for us. I would like the forthcoming U.N. General Assembly to take into account the political forces in our country and to treat them with respect. We are following resolutely state sovereignty. We want to enrich the existing union and want to become part of the union community, the European and the international communities. As a U.N. member, Ukraine is willing to participate in U.N. General Assembly meetings and discuss our wider participation in this and other international organizations.

⁴⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991*, v. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 1007.

We have great economic problems in Ukraine. I would also like to say that the establishment of your Consulate here will contribute to relations with our countries. I would be satisfied if the U.S. would permit us to open a Consulate in the U.S. As I said to the President in the car today, I also want to thank you for your assistance for Chernobyl and hope it will continue. I think the donors conference on Chernobyl will give a new emphasis to Chernobyl problems. The nuclear agency in Vienna gave a report, a rather modest assessment of the problem. The conference will help with an objective view of this problem.

The President: First, I want to say how pleased we are to be here in Ukraine and are sorry that time is so short. I am moved by the warmth of the reception you and your people gave us on the streets. The dramatic results of perestroika and glasnost have produced a new opening for the U.S. and Ukraine. I have had a chance to explain to Chairman Kravchuk that we'll deal officially with the center. I told him of my deep respect for President Gorbachev. But as the Union Treaty is worked out, I understand it will allow more direct dealings with the republics. In the meantime, we can go forward with economic issues, with nuclear safety. There are a lot of areas where the U.S. can be helpful.

On our Consulate, I am delighted it is here. A reciprocal opening would have to depend on the details of the Union Treaty. I hope you will agree with that. I know we are short of time but there is a delicate balance here and I want to deal respectfully with the center. And yet we have a couple of hundred years of tradition with the U.S. and other countries dealing in many ways. There may be some standard thing but Ukraine has a tremendous following in the states where there are well over one million Ukraine-Americans. This allows us to start off with a lot going for us on both sides. So, I think I will leave it there for now, but I would be glad to respond to questions you or your associates may have.

Prime Minister Fokin: It is a great privilege for me to consider myself as your personal friend after this meeting. I will not repeat what Chairman Kravchuk has said. I followed your airport speech with great attention. I am satisfied by the fact that the propositions I will make will respond to your ideas on cooperation with the U.S. I would like to suggest:

First, I think Ukraine should be given Most Favored Nation status and, based on this, I suggest that relations between Ukraine and the U.S. should be expanded.

Second, concerning U.S. investments, they will be guaranteed here by the National Bank and the ministries. They can be made in new projects or in reconstruction. What I would like to stress is that these are not loans but investments of any possible scope up to \$5 billion. For this purpose, we should set up a joint commercial bank based on shares.

Third, the American side should participate in the privatization of industries here: in coal mining, mechanical engineering, and light industry. After the reconstruction of industries, we could use them to renew our economy. U.S. firms will be given the possibility to trade freely here.

Fourth, we can guarantee investments of rubles in joint ventures, primarily to produce consumer goods.

Fifth, we would like to establish a Ukrainian-U.S. association which would open shops and stores here in Ukraine and in those parts of the U.S. with heavy concentrations of Ukrainian-Americans (Fokin handed a list of ideas to the President).

The President: Well, we will have to take a look at these ideas. Of course, we are already doing MFN which covers all of the USSR, so you will benefit from that. We will look at all five areas but it doesn't sound like we can't do any of these. Trade is no problem. And the new projects, we're for them. Small business is a big part of U.S. [sic.] employment and we could help you with that. Let me get back to you with a more specific response.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/1 by the National Security Archive. Original in Scowcroft, Brent, Files, Presidential Memcons, Presidential Meetings—Memorandum of Conversations 7/24/91-9/24/91.]

Epilogue

MADRID, 1991

After the successful Moscow summit and in anticipation of the signing of the new Union Treaty, scheduled for August 20, Mikhail Gorbachev went on a long overdue vacation in the Crimea. While he and his family badly needed this break, many could not understand why he would go away during this crucial period. And, indeed, the hard-liners, brought to power by the general secretary himself, struck the day before the Treaty was scheduled to be signed. Gorbachev found himself under house arrest in the resort town of Foros with no connection to the outside world while a state of emergency was introduced around the country. The news reached George Bush in Kennebunkport early in the morning of August 19, and left him acutely troubled. His reaction, however, was ambivalent—on the one hand he felt deeply for his embattled partner, but on the other, he was already beginning to weigh the possibility that he might have to “live with the new leaders, however repulsive their behavior.” In his first press conference after hearing about the coup, Bush called the hard-liners’ actions “extra-constitutional” and “disturbing,” but did not condemn them outright.¹

In his initial telephone conversations with European leaders, John Major, Felipe González, and Helmut Kohl encouraged Bush to try immediately to get through to Gorbachev directly and make strong public statements on his behalf. Unable to reach Gorbachev, Bush finally spoke to Yeltsin on August 20.² As it became clearer the coup would not succeed, the words from the Bush administration started sounding more decisive in support of Gorbachev and Yeltsin and in denunciation of the “Emergency Committee” in Moscow. When Gorbachev finally reached Bush, his tone was emotional: “My dearest George, I am so happy to hear your voice!” The Soviet president was eager to reconnect with his main international partner and resume his role on the world stage.

But it was a different Gorbachev returning to a different country. The centrifugal processes that he tried to prevent with the signing of the Union Treaty were now in full force. The republican leaders had tasted sovereignty and were concerned about the possibility of hard-liners coming to power in Russia. At the same time, each of them was attempting to hold on to their own centers of power and not let the opposition form new governments. Eventually, almost all first party secretaries would become leaders of new independent states. To achieve that, they had to take the banner of nationalism away from the authentic nationalist and dissident

¹ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 520–521.

² Document No.142.

movements—a process that was especially important in Ukraine, where the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, professional Soviet apparatchik Leonid Kravchuk, maneuvered to coopt both the nationalist Rukh and the dissident opposition.³

In early September, the Bush administration was attempting to readjust its policy to the USSR and to decide to what extent the continued existence of the Union was in the interests of the United States. Bush and Baker believed that keeping the Union going, even with a weak center, was the best alternative to violent disintegration. (The Americans did not know at the time that tactical nuclear weapons were spread about in 14 of the 15 republics while strategic nuclear weapons were stationed in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus.) At a key NSC meeting on September 5, senior members of the administration presented their views. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney was the strongest proponent of encouraging the rapid disintegration of the USSR because he saw the fracturing of the former enemy as a diminution of threat. When he argued that “the voluntary breakup of the Soviet Union is in our interest,” Baker reminded him of Yugoslavia.⁴ Shockingly, Brent Scowcroft wrote in his memoir that he “thought there was positive benefit in the breakup of command and control over strategic nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union to several republics. Anything which would serve to dilute the size of an attack we might have to face was, in my view, a benefit well worth the deterioration of unified control over the weapons.”⁵ By comparison, President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis worried about a single bomb landing on an American city. Here, President George H.W. Bush seems to have been one of a very few U.S. actors to see both the opportunity and the danger. Gorbachev was not going to be around much longer to make the arms-race-in-reverse happen. So Bush insisted on pushing the envelope, and given the reality in the Soviet Union, with so many ideological blinders about Soviet behavior in tatters on the floor of the Situation Room, the NSC agreed with the president’s push to offer significant and unilateral disarmament initiatives.

With the apparent exception of Scowcroft and Cheney, the United States’ leadership was extremely concerned about the state of nuclear command and control in the Soviet Union. In the beginning of September, Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, visited Moscow and met with Gorbachev. When the senator asked the Soviet president whether he had been in control of the nuclear button during the coup, Gorbachev did not give a clear answer.⁶ That was because he was not in control. The visit added fuel to Nunn’s existing concerns and led him to launch a campaign to put together an aid package

³ The best analysis of politics of Ukrainian independence is in Plokhy, *The Last Empire*, pp. 158–161.

⁴ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 541.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

⁶ Record of conversation between Nunn and Gorbachev, September 1, 1991, Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1; Sam Nunn testimony at the National Security Archive critical oral history conference, September 26, 2013.

to help the USSR secure and dismantle its nuclear weapons. Notwithstanding the reluctance of the Bush administration and open resistance on the part of Cheney, by mid-November Nunn's idea found its realization in an unprecedented bipartisan congressional initiative that became known as the Nunn-Lugar Program, which would last 20 years and become arguably the single most successful cooperative security program ever established between the United States and Russia.

Bush's understanding that the sand was running out in the hourglass jump-started U.S. thinking, propelling it past a fistful of hard-and-fast previous positions on matters like tactical nuclear weapons on U.S. Navy ships. Never in the U.S. national security interest (with far more coastline to protect than the USSR), the Navy's sticking point came apart quickly when the president ordered immediate moves toward denuclearization—ironically, based on a proposal Gorbachev had first tabled at Malta in 1989. Bush's urgent post-coup search for deep disarmament initiatives led to a dramatic package of proposals and unilateral moves, which he presented to Gorbachev on September 27 in hopes that Moscow would reciprocate. The Soviets responded with their own counterproposals on October 5. Both sets of initiatives were truly groundbreaking but they came too late in the game, after Gorbachev was already unable to push them through to full implementation. Yet, without this back-and-forth, hundreds if not thousands of nuclear warheads would have been in place in more than a dozen Soviet republics at the point of the Soviet Union's demise. In the history of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists'* Doomsday Clock, spanning virtually the entire atomic age, this set of agreements in the fall of 1991 produced the biggest shift away from midnight.

On the U.S. side, Bush offered the repatriation and destruction of all tactical nuclear weapons based in Europe, removal of all tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. Navy vessels, a halt to the installation of Tomahawk cruise missiles, and a lowering of the alert level. He also called on Gorbachev to start negotiations on eliminating MIRVs (most of them stationed in Ukraine) and on security measures for dismantling nuclear warheads and promoting nuclear safety. In his response, Gorbachev offered even deeper cuts in strategic weapons (50 percent over the limits just negotiated in START I). He repeated his long-standing proposal, first put on the table in 1988 while Reagan was still in the White House, of a "third zero"—elimination of all tactical nuclear weapons. This was probably Gorbachev's top priority in arms control, second only to the complete abolition of all nuclear weapons. He also announced a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and expressed his support for a global test ban while committing to a reduction of the Soviet Army by 700,000 troops. The Soviet leader also repeated the proposal he first made during the 1991 Moscow summit, to create a U.S.-Soviet strategic stability group to prevent and resolve international crises.

These proposals gave Gorbachev an opening to invigorate his "autumn offensive,"⁷ on which he had embarked in early September, both in domestic

⁷ Plokhy, *The Last Empire*, p. 29.

politics and internationally. Yeltsin might have had the popular imagination, the podium in the Supreme Soviet, the ability to undermine Gorbachev in the republics, and the initiative for political change, but Gorbachev retained a special camaraderie with international leaders, and the status of official representative of whatever Soviet federation survived—something Yeltsin could only envy. That was Gorbachev's survival strategy.

On September 10, the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE opened in Moscow. The achievement was bittersweet. It was Gorbachev's dream to have a CSCE meeting in the Soviet capital as a way to recognize how the country had changed—in fact, Shevardnadze had proposed it in November 1986, in his speech to the opening session of the CSCE Vienna review conference. At the time it was met with a skeptical and even negative reaction from Western delegates. After a lot of work by the Foreign Ministry together with its U.S. counterparts and an unprecedented domestic opening, the West was finally persuaded. Gorbachev was enthusiastic; he addressed a hall filled with foreign ministers and ambassadors who had come to Moscow mainly to pay respects to the man responsible for the tremendous change that made the gathering possible. To a large degree, they already viewed him as a president without a country; the Soviet Union had entered a period of final disintegration after the August coup. Gorbachev probably was the only person at the meeting who still believed in the possibility of integrating the Soviet Union into Europe. In the perceptive words of his spokesman, Andrei Grachev, "he was inspired by an almost religious faith in the feasibility of finally joining these two separate worlds and a burning desire to bring this about."⁸

The humanitarian conference was in some ways the crowning symbol and the final note of Gorbachev's domestic reform. Delegates could see the results of deep changes in the human rights sphere accomplished by *perestroika*. Sergey Kovalev, a former political prisoner and now deputy of the Supreme Soviet (he had been a guest at the Spaso House dinner hosted by Reagan on May 30, 1988), addressed the session with a fairly harsh speech setting new challenges for Soviet human rights performance. Several dissident groups took part in the sessions and international NGOs were welcome participants with unobstructed access to anybody they wished to contact.

While traditional human rights concerns were being addressed and removed, the danger of nationalism was rising in the republics, threatening the rights of minorities and the very existence of the USSR. Instead of being a step to the European future for the country, the humanitarian conference's main achievement was that it took place after all. Ironically, its main value was less in its results than in the process of preparing for it. The Soviet leadership had been required to make considerable concessions in order to attain this prize—confirmation that European values were taking root now in the Soviet Union.

⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

Visiting secretary of state Baker found Gorbachev revitalized by the experience: “the shaken Gorbachev of late August was gone, replaced by his former self—the Soviet reformer with little if any self-doubt.”⁹ Baker also wrote to Bush about the newfound closeness and cooperation between Yeltsin and Gorbachev—although it was not to last.

With Yeltsin on vacation later in September, Gorbachev was able to play the role of global statesman and gracious host. He resumed his flurry of international meetings. He met with Giulio Andreotti and Hosni Mubarak to discuss the Middle East and the upcoming Madrid conference. On October 1, he met with Henning Christopherson, the vice president of the European Commission, and soon after that with Michael Camdessus, director of the International Monetary Fund, to discuss the economic structures of the new Union Treaty and international assistance. U.S. secretary of agriculture Edward Madigan came to discuss the agricultural credits Bush had promised at the Moscow summit. Negotiations with John Major about a program of emergency aid were especially active, resulting in a preliminary pledge of 10 billion dollars on November 14. Gorbachev understood that ensuring external aid was the strongest means of keeping his new Union project on track.¹⁰

Another major shared concern of both superpowers was Yugoslavia. Both presidents saw the specter of a disintegrating USSR in the microcosm of Yugoslavia and tried to prevent the general collapse in the Balkans. According to Gorbachev’s spokesman and adviser, Andrei Grachev, “the nightmare of Yugoslavia tormented him,” yet he also believed that if he could help to keep it together it would provide serious ammunition against nationalists in the Soviet republics.¹¹ At the end of September, Gorbachev made a public statement on Yugoslavia calling for a ceasefire, and invited leaders of Serbia and Croatia to Moscow. On October 15, Slobodan Milosevich of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia met in Moscow and after a full day of negotiations with Gorbachev—first one-on-one and then in a long trilateral session—produced a ceasefire agreement. To Grachev’s question, both leaders responded that “the experience of perestroika gives Gorbachev the moral right to advise us, and we are prepared to listen to his recommendations.”¹² It was no small feat simply to bring the two antagonists to the table, but the ceasefire agreement did not last—a bad omen for Gorbachev’s own Union project.

The Soviet leader’s domestic agenda—specifically, the fight to keep the Union together as a Union of Sovereign States (in other words a confederation)—was front and center in all interactions between the superpowers in 1991. The treaty that was negotiated at the governmental residence at Novo-Ogarevo was moribund after the coup. The process had to be started anew. The coup also

⁹ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 527.

¹⁰ Gorbachev, *Zhizn’ I reformy*, vol. 2, pp. 609–612.

¹¹ Plokhy, *The Last Empire*, p. 18.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

resulted in some significant changes in the political landscape. The Congress of People's Deputies disbanded itself in early September 1991, leaving in place a quite dysfunctional Supreme Soviet at the Union level. Legislative initiative had shifted to the Russian parliament, still named the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. The KGB was eliminated, broken into three agencies, thus also weakening ties that bound the republics together. A new structure was created—the State Council consisting of leaders of the republics—designed to negotiate the new treaty and oversee the process of transition. It held its first meeting on October 11. Grachev described it as an “awkward imitation of the U.N. Security Council composed of former members of the Politburo.”¹³ However, Gorbachev put his faith and hopes in this Council. Very soon it produced a vague Economic Community Agreement, signed on October 18 (Ukraine signed on November 6). The accord included a commitment to a single currency and the preservation of economic ties. Yeltsin supported it and acted cooperatively. Meanwhile, negotiations for a political agreement were proceeding. For a fleeting moment in mid-October, it seemed that Gorbachev's project was on the right track, providing a promising setting for the Madrid conference.

Bush and Gorbachev arrived in Madrid on October 28, ready to preside together over the opening of a very ambitious conference, which grew directly out of their understandings reached during the Helsinki summit in September 1990. During Helsinki, Gorbachev had asked to link the resolution of the Kuwait crisis and withdrawal of Saddam Hussein's troops with a comprehensive international conference on the Middle East. Bush refused the linkage but promised that after the Persian Gulf conflict the superpowers would co-sponsor a meeting on the region. After months of diplomatic efforts, most importantly by Secretary Baker, but also by Soviet diplomats, the main Middle East actors were about to meet in Madrid. Moscow granted diplomatic recognition to Israel just days beforehand. The mere fact that U.S. and Soviet leaders would open the event together was an important symbol of the end of the Cold War. As recently as October 1989 U.S. national security strategy had demanded that the “United States remains committed to defend its vital interests in the region, if necessary and appropriate through the use of U.S. military force, against the Soviet Union or any other regional power with interests inimical to our own.”¹⁴ Now the United States was bringing its former opponent into negotiations as a partner in resolving this festering conflict. And yet, it was another of many accomplishments that came too late. Gorbachev and the Soviet Union were losing influence and their ability to carry out joint agreements. The Middle East was no longer a priority for Moscow.

Instead, Gorbachev wanted Madrid to serve as a forum where the two presidents would discuss the fate of the world on the eve of the conference and cement their cooperation as the key global security dynamic. He was also hoping

¹³ Grachev, *Final Days*, p. 93.

¹⁴ National Security Directive 26, October 2, 1989, *US Policy Toward the Persian Gulf*, p. 1.

to get to talk to Bush privately about his need for urgent assistance for his reform program—to keep the USSR from disintegrating and to show Yeltsin who still had the ear of global leaders. For his part, however, Bush was expecting to see a president without a country, almost anticipating losing Gorbachev as a partner in his diary: “Reports recently that he might not be around long. The briefing book indicates this may be my last meeting with him of this nature. Time marches on.”¹⁵ The scene-setter memo for the summit declared succinctly, “Prospects for a political union, and therefore a long-term role for Gorbachev as union president, seem nil.”¹⁶ The briefing book’s prediction turned out to be on target.

As Gorbachev rode to the airport on the way to Madrid, Yeltsin addressed the Russian parliament with an explosive speech. (Gorbachev spoke with Yeltsin about it ahead of time but the latter did not reveal the full content.) The address asked the Supreme Soviet for emergency powers to implement radical economic reform, including speedy price liberalization. This unilateral program, not discussed or coordinated with other republican leaders, essentially undermined previous economic agreements, and decisively chose the “go it alone” path for Russia, including dramatic cuts in funding for most central structures. (The Foreign Ministry would be cut by 90 percent.) From the Soviet transcript of the Bush and Gorbachev one-on-one meeting in Madrid, we know that the U.S. side had information about the content of the upcoming speech and contacted the Russian leadership with requests to tone it down, but the attempt was in vain.¹⁷

As a result, a lot of discussion in Madrid was focused on this speech by Yeltsin—Gorbachev’s counterparts were quite shocked by it and wanted to hear his reaction and his assessment of Yeltsin’s position. Gorbachev was in a delicate position; he felt he had to defend Yeltsin because cooperation with the Russian president was a *sine qua non* for the success of the new Union Treaty and its viability in the eyes of global leaders. Yet he was deeply hurt by what he perceived as a betrayal on Yeltsin’s part, and it was impossible to hide this behind polite phrases about his support for Yeltsin’s economic reform.

Gorbachev believed at the time that Yeltsin was under the influence of his close advisers, and that this explained his frequent turnabouts. In his memoir he dates the turning point in Yeltsin’s evolution to a particular moment in September 1991, when Yeltsin’s secretary of state, “the evil genius” Gennady Burbulis, brought to his boss in Sochi a secret memorandum entitled “Strategy for Russia in the Transition Period.”¹⁸ Drafted by Burbulis, it called for the speedy formation of a Russian state that would be the sole legal heir to the Soviet Union and would embark on a radical economic reform alone, leaving behind the center and the rest of the republics. This was the strategy—to get rid of Gorbachev by dismantling the Union.

¹⁵ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 548.

¹⁶ Document No. 147.

¹⁷ Document No. 151; Gorbachev Foundation transcript donated by Andrei Grachev.

¹⁸ Gorbachev, *Zhizn’ I reformy*, p. 589.

Gorbachev's interlocutors in Madrid, including King Juan Carlos, expressed their sincere outrage at Yeltsin's speech and their support for Gorbachev. Bush spoke very frankly: "I hope you know the position of our government: we support the center. Without giving up contacts with the republics, we support the center and you personally." He even mentioned that his speech in Kiev had cost him politically—on the eve of an election year he was seen as clinging to Gorbachev rather than throwing his support behind the "democratic forces" led by Yeltsin.¹⁹ All conversations involved detailed discussions of the new Union Treaty. Gorbachev insisted on a single country with unified armed forces and a popularly elected president, a unified power grid, a transportation network, communications, space exploration, and a single economic space. At different times Gorbachev agreed with Bush that Yeltsin was trying to substitute Russia for the center in the new structure but then also said that Yeltsin understood the need for the center and realized that Russian economic reform was impossible without it.

In the first conversation of the summit, at lunch in an extended format, Gorbachev was upbeat and joking, presenting all the recent developments in a positive light and giving assurances of rapid progress on the Union Treaty and on the secure control of nuclear weapons. After lunch, with only Bush, Scowcroft, Shevardnadze and Chernyaev remaining in the room, the tone became more somber. Following a brief discussion of the conference and Yugoslavia, the conversation shifted to an analysis of the Soviet internal situation and the Yeltsin speech. Gorbachev focused on his real main priority—obtaining urgent financial assistance—and he appealed to Bush in very assertive terms, asking for 10-15 billion dollars and arguing that if the "current crisis escalated then we—you and us—will pay much more later."²⁰ But for Bush at the moment, even \$1.5 billion was a problem and he was fairly straightforward about his electoral concerns. Assurances and emotional support notwithstanding, Gorbachev would be going home empty-handed. At the press conference, interpreter Pavel Palazhchenko noticed that as the Americans "watched Gorbachev, their expressions were skeptical, cold and indifferent.... [T]hey had now concluded that Mikhail Gorbachev belonged to the past."²¹

The high point of the summit was the state dinner hosted by King Juan Carlos along with Prime Minister González, the foreign leader Gorbachev felt was closest to him in his thinking and ideas. The four-hour conversation ranged from Soviet domestic to international subjects and allowed Gorbachev to play the role of global statesman once again. Yeltsin's speech was one of the first subjects. Bush was concerned by Yeltsin's statements about the borders and Russian minorities in the republics, especially in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Gorbachev noted the volatility of the Ukrainian situation: "Ukraine in its present form emerged

¹⁹ Document No. 151.

²⁰ Document No. 149.

²¹ Palazhchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze*, p. 339.

only because the Bolsheviks did not have a majority in the Rada, and they added Kharkov and Donbass to the Ukraine. And Khrushchev passed the Crimea from Russia to the Ukraine in a brotherly gesture.” Crimea, he said, decided to stay with Ukraine only on the assumption that Ukraine would be inseparable from Russia, which might change if Ukraine decided not to join the Union.²² Gorbachev made a passionate statement about his determination to see his country hold together: “I will do everything to preserve the Union, of course a renewed one, with extensive rights for sovereign republics, but at the same time with the kind of center they need, which would service the single economic space, ensure defense with unified armed forces, ensure a coordinated foreign policy and everything that one should not disrupt—a single power grid, transportation and communications, ecology.” Most of the dinner conversation focused on Gorbachev’s domestic situation, his hopes for the new Union and his struggles with Yeltsin. Although all the principals were outspoken in their sympathy for his predicament, they also understood that his chances were slim. Madrid turned out to be the last superpower summit.

On the way back from Madrid, the Soviet leader stopped in Latche, France, for a visit with François Mitterrand at his vacation home. Their conversations were anticlimactic, akin to a long goodbye. When Chernyaev looked at his notes from Latche, he realized that their remarks looked “like a bequest ... or if not a bequest, then parting words to political descendants.” They spoke about the U.S. role in Europe and about NATO. However, when Gorbachev put forward his vision that the new Union would be the second pillar of stability in Europe and counterbalance NATO, Mitterrand rather dismissively pointed out that currently there was just a single pillar, the Western one. He offered the consolation that “it is important that the transformations in the Soviet Union contributed to the politico-economic rapprochement between East and West, and the creation of what you call the common European home.” Surprisingly, Gorbachev did not pick up on the subject of the European home, which represented probably the greatest missed opportunity of the period in his mind, but he shared the French president’s concern about NATO’s possible future encroachment on the political role that the CSCE and other European organizations played on the continent. Gorbachev spoke about his vision for the new democratic Union as an active player in Europe and internationally. Although the atmosphere was warm and genuinely friendly, Mitterrand no longer treated him as the partner with whom he was going to build new European structures. The door to the European home was closed for the time being, maybe even forever.

Upon arriving home, Gorbachev found his new Union project disintegrating even further. He was able to stanch the process by applying pressure on Yeltsin and threatening resignation, but that would not work for long. On December 1, Ukraine held a referendum in which 70 percent of the population voted

²² Document No. 150.

for independence. Kravchuk was elected president and made it clear to Yeltsin that he was not going to be part of the new Union Treaty negotiations in any form. On December 8, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed the Belovezhie agreement to dissolve the USSR and create a Commonwealth of Independent States. Yeltsin rushed to phone Bush to inform him, emphasizing that Gorbachev did not know yet about it.²³ Gorbachev actually heard the news from Belarus's leader, Stanislav Shushkevich. The most prominent non-Slav republic leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, had declined to join the Belovezhie crew, demanding instead a meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to produce a successor federation. From now on, the remaining superpower interactions would be about ensuring an orderly transition and control over nuclear weapons.

In his last extended trip to the Soviet Union, James Baker held extensive discussions with Gorbachev, Yeltsin, new Defense Minister Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, Shevardnadze, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev and other key people in Moscow before traveling to Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. Baker found Yeltsin "swaggering" and Gorbachev "subdued" but engaged and expressing his full support for the transition. Baker's conversation with Gorbachev was especially warm and substantive, both of them expressing their determination that the democratic transformation would continue within the new structures. In addition to nuclear issues and economic reform discussions, Baker also tried to make sure that the new authorities would treat Gorbachev with respect and not try to demean him. Gorbachev accepted his predicament gracefully; he did not try to do anything to undermine his successors. Baker was impressed by the loyalty displayed by the president, Shevardnadze and Yakovlev to the end.²⁴

On December 25, just before delivering his farewell speech as president of the USSR, Gorbachev phoned his trusted partner, George Bush. He "was not bitter about the collapse of the Soviet Union" but asked Bush to continue to provide support for Russia's democratic development. Gorbachev expressed appreciation for all they had done together and his hope for a future partnership in some new form. The U.S. president felt that he was "caught up in history" at some "enormous turning point." This turning point was also the end point of the superpower summits. Gorbachev said a simple "good bye" and shook Bush's hands virtually; Bush responded, "good bye." These were the parting words in the long conversation that ended the Cold War and transformed the world.

²³ Document No. 154.

²⁴ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 573.

Document No. 141: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–González, 1:51 p.m. – 2:02 p.m.

August 19, 1991

At 6:00 in the morning of August 19, hard-line Soviet officials made the stunning announcement that they had removed Gorbachev from power—for “health reasons”—and were declaring a nationwide state of emergency. The Soviet leader, on holiday in the Crimea, had already been taken into custody and his exact whereabouts were not known for three days. When news of the coup broke, President Bush was also vacationing—in Kennebunkport, Maine. His inclination, as well as Scowcroft’s, was to act cautiously and avoid statements of condemnation until more information was available. In his first press conference from Maine, he used the word “extraconstitutional” to refer to the putsch. Bush wanted to stay in Kennebunkport, but after conversations with John Major and other European leaders, who all encouraged him to be more resolute, he decided to fly to Washington for a day. Felipe González, a Spanish socialist, whom Gorbachev called his closest interlocutor among all the European leaders, called Bush while he was on the plane and encouraged him to try to reach Gorbachev directly and to undertake “strong diplomatic action in all fora possible.”

The President: Felipe, how are you? This is George Bush.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: I am fine. And you?

The President: Doing fine. I’m very much concerned about events in the Soviet Union. Indeed, I’m about to land in Washington to talk about these matters. What’s on your mind? The same thing?

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, as a matter of fact, I was in the countryside myself. I’ve just returned to the city. We just held an emergency meeting. We think that events are going to turn into a coup plus an “involution.” What consequences do you think will come out of this?

The President: It’s a little early to say. I’m trying to calm down any discussion of military action while encouraging the return to reform. I think it’s very early to say what will happen. Yeltsin has strong personal support and I’m hoping that the coup will be reversed, but I’m not sure how that can happen. What we are doing is saying that this is outside the legal process, that it is not a legal step and that we want to see the reforms continue. We are going to support Yeltsin’s appeal for the return to the reforms but we are stopping short of trying to answer questions about whether we will take some military action. I think it’s very important we not go overboard here.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, this is definitely not the time to try to find any course of military action or foster such a step. This is definitely the time for strong diplomatic action in all fora possible. George, I wanted to tell you that

I myself have tried to talk directly to Gorbachev, although I knew it was practically impossible, but I think you should try to get in touch directly.

The President: I think that's a good idea and may just try it when I'm in the White House. John Major also tried to reach Gorbachev and was told no lines were available. I expect I would get the same answer. But I think there is some good symbolism in trying to reach Gorbachev.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, I think that would be a very good gesture because we don't want to have the image of Gorbachev falling right now. We don't want them to think we don't feel anything as far as Gorbachev is concerned and we don't want to destroy his image.

The President: I agree with that. Yeltsin is expressing strong support for Gorbachev, all of which is good.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes. Evidently he wants to recover Gorbachev's image because he wants to restore legality.

The President: This new vice president made some statement a little while ago, saying he hoped he would be able to work with Gorbachev in the future. He says Gorbachev is tired. We are confused as to what that means.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, I think that's what he tried to say, and I think it was a joke, in bad taste and rather cynical as far as remarks go. The last point I want to make is that we have to concentrate on supporting the East European countries. We have to show solidarity with them.

The President: No question about that. I will be talking to a couple of those leaders myself this afternoon or certainly by tomorrow morning. They are concerned. Major has already received a call from the President of Hungary.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, precisely. The European Community will meet tomorrow. We're going to issue a statement indicating respect for the process of reform and also for all the steps that have been adopted in the past. We also hope that there will be some statement of support for Gorbachev, at least so that he can recover his personal freedom.

The President: I hope so too, and we certainly agree with that. Let me discuss the idea of trying to call Gorbachev as an expression of that.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: That's fine, and let's try and keep in touch over the next few days.

The President: OK, let's do it and thanks for the call. We've just landed in DC. I'll go in and go to work. I hope to go back to Maine tomorrow. We have good communications there so if you want to give me a call, do so.

Prime Minister Gonzalez: OK, thank you very much.

The President: Goodbye my friend.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/3 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 142: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Yeltsin, 8:18 a.m. – 8:35 a.m.

August 20, 1991

Early in the morning on the second day of the coup, unable to get through to Gorbachev, Bush calls Yeltsin to seek his views on the situation in Moscow. He finds the Russian president determined to resist the rebellion and restore Gorbachev to power. Yeltsin calls the situation “critical,” encourages Bush to speak to Gorbachev directly and denounces the putsch in the most decisive terms as “unconstitutional, illegal” and having “no force on Russian territory.” To Bush’s suggestion that he “would be prepared to call Yanayev,” the Soviet vice president who is leading the putsch, Yeltsin responds: “No, absolutely, you should not do that. An official call from you would legitimize them.” As later events have shown, Yeltsin’s decisive actions, including his memorable speech from atop a tank outside Parliament, would catalyze the democratic opposition in Moscow and contribute directly to the failure of the coup.

The President: Just checking up to see how things are going from your end.

President Yeltsin: Good morning.

The President: Good morning. I just wanted a first hand report on the situation from your end.

President Yeltsin: The situation is very complex. A group of eight individuals essentially put together an anti-constitutional coup. President Gorbachev is located in Foros in the Crimea. He is absolutely blocked, no way of reaching him.

President Yanayev is using the pretext that Gorbachev is ill, but this is not confirmed. Essentially a committee of eight people has taken over the presidency and established a state of emergency in Russian territory, and the Baltics. Troops have been brought up to Moscow, not only in the city, but in Moscow district and surrounding towns. And by issuing decision 1 and 2 the group has exposed itself as no more than a right-wing junta. I appeared before the people and soldiers and I said that actions of the Committee were unconstitutional, illegal, and have no force on Russian territory.

The building of the Supreme Soviet and the office of the President is surrounded and I expect a storming of the building at any moment. We have been here 24 hours. We won’t leave. I have appealed to 100,000 people standing outside to defend the legally elected government.

Basically this is a right-wing coup, each member of the group is well known. They want to take over the democratically elected leadership of Russia, Lenin-grad, Moscow, and other cities. This morning I gave Lukyanov, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, ten demands, the first of which is to meet with Gorbachev.

Mr. President, it would be good if you yourself could demand to speak on the phone with Gorbachev and to rally world leaders to the fact that the situation

here is critical. We've also announced a strike and practically all factories and plants are at a standstill. We will continue demanding this until the Committee is thrown out and tried in court. We are not losing any hope or faith unless they resort to the most extreme and bloody measures. Of course a wounded animal is the most dangerous thing and we have no assurances that they won't resort to extreme measures.

The President: You have our full support for the return of Gorbachev and the legitimate government. We will reiterate that early today. I tried to place a call to Gorbachev yesterday and couldn't get through. But I like the idea of saying publicly that I want to talk to him. I would be perfectly....

President Yeltsin: Yes, thanks for saying that. If Gorbachev is sick then we should demand international doctors, like the WHO, examine him.

The President: We saw that you made that suggestion. I agree that it is a good idea.

President Yeltsin: Yes, we have changes happening so fast that we should talk at the end of the day tomorrow. Things are literally changing hour by hour.

The President: I'm happy to do that. I hope that the lines will not be cut off.

President Yeltsin: Yes, Mr. President. I do appreciate your attention and support. The Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev has flown to the U.N. to report to the Secretary General.

The President: I suggest that I call you at 5:00 tomorrow your time. You can try to call here. I'll try to call you, but if I can't get through, you try here. The number is....

President Yeltsin: Understood.

The President: I would be prepared to call Yanayev, but I don't want to do anything to legitimize the regime. What is your thought on that.

President Yeltsin: No, absolutely, you should not do that. An official call from you would legitimize them. We tried to send a group to the Crimea to meet with Gorbachev but he is surrounded by three circles of armed guards and KGB.

The President: We'll keep trying to reach him. We're not hopeful but it legitimizes the Gorbachev regime.

President Yeltsin: Mr. President. Thanks so much, these are very good positive steps. They will help all of us here.

The President: I will do all I can to keep the European countries on board—all of them. I talked to a number of leaders yesterday, [sic] are very supportive of the position you outlined and the position I outlined to them.

President Yeltsin: Thanks very much.

The President: Good luck and congratulations on your courage and commitment. We sympathize and pray with you. All the American people support you. What you're doing is absolutely right.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/3 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 143: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 12:19 p.m. – 12:31 p.m.

August 21, 1991

The coup in Moscow crumbled on the third day and the democratic forces emerged with a clear victory. Gorbachev was returning to Moscow as president, but he did not yet understand how these three days had weakened his power, consolidated progressive forces around Yeltsin and undermined his plans for a new union treaty (set for signing on August 19). After trying for two days, the U.S. military switchboard was finally able to get through to Gorbachev in the Crimean resort of Foros, just one hour after he became reconnected to the world. When Bush picks up the phone, the Soviet president greets him warmly as “my dearest George.” In the conversation that follows, Gorbachev briefly describes his conditions during the last four days—entirely cut off from land and sea, and without any communications. He expresses his appreciation for the positions Yeltsin and other republic leaders took in refusing to support the coup and observes that the “society is different now,” so “things like this will not work.” He is relieved that his overthrow “was prevented by democracy.” He thanks Bush for his principled position during the coup, calling him “stalwart” in his support. For his part, Bush is relieved to be talking to “the same old Mikhail Gorbachev, one full of life and confidence.”

The President: Oh my God, that’s wonderful. Mikhail!

President Gorbachev: My dearest George. I’m so happy to hear your voice again.

The President: My God I’m glad to hear you. How are you doing?

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, the adventurers have not succeeded. I have been here four days. They tried to pressure me, using every method. They had me blocked by sea and land. My guards protected me, we withstood the challenge.

The President: Where are you now?

President Gorbachev: I’m in the Crimea. It’s only been one hour since I have assumed Presidential powers. I have maintained full contact with the Republic leaders and handed over the Ministry of Defense to Moiseyev. He is to follow my orders only. Troops are to move out of the city or back to where they are normally based.

The President: That’s good.

President Gorbachev: Everything we’ve done together to improve cooperation with the republics has worked beautifully. All of them have taken positions of principle. The greatest opponent of these illegal acts was Yeltsin, the Supreme Soviet, Kravchuk, Nazarbayev, and K...

The President: Well I was damned worried about it.

President Gorbachev: You know this was a terrible tragedy. It showed that the adventurers won't succeed. The society is different now. Things like this won't work.

The President: Where are the adventurers?

President Gorbachev: Some are coming this way to me. I don't know what they are bearing in their hands. The next two days I must make all these crucial decisions.

The President: Have you talked to Yeltsin yet?

President Gorbachev: He was the first one.

The President: I don't know what news you've been getting, but we've been supporting Yeltsin and you as President of the USSR.

President Gorbachev: I have to congratulate you and the position you took from the first minute. You have been stalwart. Thanks for taking off from your vacation. You affected everyone with your strong statements, except Qadhafi.

The President: Don't know what news you got in the last few days.

President Gorbachev: I was cut off completely.

The President: Were you filled in just now?

President Gorbachev: Yes, everything started with me now.

The President: When are you going back to Moscow?

President Gorbachev: Either tonight or early tomorrow morning.

The President: Good luck. If I can say or do anything I will be available night or day. Don't hesitate to call.

President Gorbachev: Yes, George, absolutely. I will have the need to talk to you. I have to go back to take some urgent, necessary steps and then we will have some matters to discuss with you.

The President: I'm happy that you are safe and back. Barbara is here and sends her love to Raisa.

President Gorbachev: George, thank you and Barb both for your position of principle, but also for your humanity and friendship.

The President: Just glad you're well. I want to say to the press and the world that we've had this conversation.

President Gorbachev: Yes, I'd only be thankful to you for that.

The President: I'll get that message out to the whole world now. Bless you and your family.

President Gorbachev: We want to keep going ahead with you. We will not falter because of what happened. One thing is that this was prevented by democracy. This is a guarantee for us. We will keep working in the country and out to keep cooperation going.

The President: Sounds like the same old Mikhail Gorbachev, one full of life and confidence. Once you get back we'll talk about what to work on since our talks in Moscow.

President Gorbachev: OK, George. Please proceed on this basis. Good-bye.
The President: Good-bye.

[Source: *George H.W. Bush Library*, obtained through FOIA 1999-0303-F/3 by the *National Security Archive*.]

Document No. 144: Memorandum from Scowcroft for the President: "Developments in the USSR"

September 5, 1991

Shortly after the August coup, Scowcroft gives the president a survey of the rapidly changing USSR. The main focus of this memo, prepared for a key NSC meeting on future strategy toward the Soviet Union, is the relationship between the weakened center and the republics, and more urgently, between Yeltsin and Gorbachev. Scowcroft notes Yeltsin's forceful move to gain control over the center and to place ethnic Russians in all significant posts in the provisional government. This "second coup" by Yeltsin is combined with his "warning on borders to Kazakhstan and Ukraine that they could not depart the union without leaving behind the Russianized portions of their republics." The national security adviser emphasizes the U.S. interest in having Yeltsin and Gorbachev collaborate to keep the union together. He is aware of the dangers of disintegration and worries that "despite the rhetoric supporting markets and democracy, it is not at all clear that all republic leaders, or any one leader at all times, will stick to a market-based, democratic, development strategy." Scowcroft notes that Ukraine remains a wildcard and that although President Kravchuk agrees with the need to keep the Union together, "his political situation is tenuous, and Ukrainian independence is the one cause uniting virtually all political factions in that republic." This is a perceptive description of the internal situation Gorbachev faced in early fall 1991. However, Scowcroft's policy recommendations are very limited: "The best we can do in this situation is to push hard for the new union and its constituent republics to engage with the IMF and the World Bank in drawing up economic programs which attempt to head off that inflationary spiral."

Today's decision by the Congress of People's Deputies to step aside in favor of an interim bicameral legislature giving a dominant role to representatives of the republics concludes the first phase of the revolution triggered by last month's failed coup. The major decisions now seem to be made, and the next few months will be devoted to finalizing them in a new union treaty and constitution which formally create a voluntary union of probably ten republics (Moldova and Georgia seem certain to opt out).

From the U.S. perspective, several parts of this unfolding revolution deserve particular attention:

- The course of the struggle between Gorbachev and Yel'tsin for influence over the new Union. Gorbachev has, through sheer determination and political skill, carved out a role for himself in the new union, although his power and authority are greatly diminished since you saw him in Moscow.
- The role of the new center, whose legitimacy and powers flow solely from the republics. In particular the role of Russia will be key. Whether or not a strong center can be maintained, particularly in defense and foreign

policy, will have a key effect on our ability to carry out a normal bilateral relationship.

- The political, social and economic situation of the republics—particularly Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan—whose leaderships can no longer blame the economic crisis on the center they destroyed.

GORBACHEV AND YEL'TSIN

Yel'tsin's popularity and influence, on the rise since Spring 1990, were obviously boosted by last month's events. But he made several mistakes in the first days after the coup by moving too quickly and openly to put Russians in control of the Union. Before the coup, under Yel'tsin's leadership Russia had for some time moved subtly but unmistakably to infiltrate union institutions, which was already causing some discomfort, particularly in the Asian republics. But Yel'tsin's attempt at what looked almost like a "second coup" during August 22–24—where he dictated a provisional union government to Gorbachev composed solely of Russians—combined with his warning on borders to Kazakhstan and Ukraine that they could not depart the Union without leaving behind the Russianized portions of their republics, frightened other republican leaders.

This gave Gorbachev the opening he needed to create a new constituency, primarily in the non-Slavic republics. Gorbachev was already working in this direction before the coup, something which was quite apparent in the prominence Gorbachev gave Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev during the Moscow Summit. Since the coup, Gorbachev has subtly played on other republic leaders' fears of Yel'tsin to develop support for separate economic and political unions, both of which have now been agreed to by the Congress of People's Deputies. Yel'tsin has gone along with this, even supported it, apparently because he still believes Russia needs some form of loose association with other Soviet republics, and because he also admits the continued usefulness of a center.

Ukraine is the wildcard in this. Both Yel'tsin and Gorbachev feel that Ukraine must stay in the Union. It is a huge economy tightly integrated with Russia, and an abrupt separation would be disastrous. Kravchuk may agree, but his political situation is tenuous, and Ukrainian independence is the one cause uniting virtually all political factions in that republic. It is likely in the end that Kravchuk will not win the key December elections, but that Ukraine will stay in the union, primarily as a way to try to control Russia.

In the weeks to come Gorbachev and Yel'tsin will most likely continue to work together, but also to jockey for position by playing to their respective constituencies—Yel'tsin to Russians; Gorbachev to other republics. The other lever Gorbachev has on Yel'tsin is the sixteen autonomous republics in Russia, most of whom seek independence from Russia. Notice that in the final version of the interim arrangements agreed to today Russia received 52 seats in the new body representing the republics, while all other republics only received 20, but the extra seats are there explicitly to give representation to the autonomous republics within Russia.

If Yel'tsin should lose his taste for the union, he could decide to give up on Gorbachev. Gorbachev will then lose much of his constituency, since his main value is to keep Yel'tsin in check. Such a scenario would lead to uncontrolled disintegration. But so far that seems an unlikely outcome. Both Yel'tsin and Gorbachev, for much different reasons, seem content to work together for this new union. It is very much in our interest that they do so.

THE ROLE OF THE NEW CENTER

There will be a center in this new union, and it may turn out to be fairly powerful in areas of most concern to us: defense and foreign affairs. The republican leaders seem to understand that an army under centralized operational control, but with effective oversight by authorities chosen by the republics, makes the most sense. Certainly such an arrangement reassures the outside world. Also certain is the fact that republic-based armies would create huge [sic] defense burdens on republics who need to maximize the resources they devote to economic development, as well as creating a very real threat of replicating Yugoslavia's tragic course.

Foreign affairs will be more complicated, for them, and for us. Over the last year Russia has been moving to infiltrate the union foreign affairs bureaucracy, and Yel'tsin seemed basically satisfied with the results. Now Russia will want more, as will other republics. The "one plus ten" statement to the Congress of People's Deputies even suggested that each republic could join the UN, implying (probably without knowing it) that each republic would become *de facto* a sovereign state.

We will probably find over time that there is still a union-level foreign policy, and that we will deal on the major issues with the Union's foreign minister. But we will also almost certainly see changes in Soviet foreign policy as the republics assert their right to influence the agenda. Aid to client states will most likely collapse, and soon. An aggressive arms control stance, favoring dramatic reductions in arms and a halt to nuclear testing, seem increasingly likely.

A new union treaty will probably give the republics the right to conduct their own official relationship with foreign countries. That means we will come under increasing pressure to establish direct diplomatic and economic ties with republics. On most lower-level diplomatic issues—visas for example—we may find that we are dealing primarily with republics.

In the economic area the republics are now getting the autonomy they have long sought. Each republic will now effectively control its own resources, the enterprises on its soil, its foreign commerce. The envisaged economic union will most likely be a loose one, devoted primarily in what will probably be a vain attempt to head off protectionism and "beggar-thy-neighbor" policies. There will probably be an attempt to retain a single currency and to enforce a tight monetary policy, but both seem unlikely outcomes. It is very likely that the leaders of the republics, individually and collectively, will choose to print money and tolerate inflation, in a vain attempt to avoid unemployment. The best we can do in this

situation is to push hard for the new union and its constituent republics to engage with the IMF and the World Bank in drawing up economic programs which attempt to head off that inflationary spiral. This should be one of our key emphasis as we talk to Soviet and republic leaders.

This arrangement seems almost guaranteed to lead to a dramatic fall in defense expenditures. The 500-Day Plan which Yel'tsin and Gorbachev worked out in summer of 1990, which Gorbachev subsequently rejected, called for a system much like they now have adopted. One of the most striking provisions of that plan was that defense expenditures for the Union would be determined by the size of voluntary contributions from the republics. The new system basically works that way, which surely means defense expenditures will fall. But how rapidly they will fall depends on how republican leaders, particularly in Ukraine and Russia, react when they discover that declining defense expenditures mean increasing unemployment in their biggest factories. This is why it is so important for us to work closely with the Soviets on defense conversion.

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE REPUBLICS

In this new world it will be much more important than in the past for us to be aware of political, economic, and social conditions in the republics. In the past a republican leader's position on key issues was determined by Central Committee staff in Moscow. Now it will be determined in the ballot boxes, and in some cases on the streets, of his republic. Kravchuk's position on Ukraine's participation in the Union will depend on the politics of the Ukraine, which could be much different than the politics of the Union.

As in the past, economic considerations will dominate politics for the foreseeable future. Having destroyed central power, the republican leaders have also eliminated their best excuse for the terrible economic conditions in which their constituents live. Now they will have to move quickly to show results. Despite the rhetoric supporting markets and democracy, it is not at all clear that all republic leaders, or any one leader at all times, will stick to a market-based, democratic, development strategy. They will find, as Gorbachev has, that it is terribly tempting to resort to central commands as an interim solution.

This is where active engagement by individual countries and international institutions, particularly the international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, EBRD) targeted directly at republics, can make a difference. This revolution is very much a victory for those who seek to integrate into the global system, and a defeat for those who feared western influence. The fluidity of the situation, and the search for a model, gives us now more influence than we have ever had in the Soviet Union. The issue for us is if, and how, we choose to use that influence.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-1202-F/2 by the National Security Archive. Original in NSC Burns, R. Nicholas Files and Hewett, Ed, Files, USSR Chron file: September 1991.]

Document No. 145: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 9:22 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

September 27, 1991

After the September 5 NSC meeting on strategy toward the USSR, and throughout the month of September, Bush and his national security team work on a major package of unilateral nuclear arms reductions in the expectation that the Soviet leadership would reciprocate the U.S. moves. Although these proposals were indeed unprecedented, practically all had already been offered by Gorbachev, some as early as 1988. At the time, however, the incoming Bush administration was more concerned with the “robustness” of the nuclear deterrent in Europe than with reductions in nuclear arsenals, and refused to discuss Soviet proposals on shorter-range and tactical weapons. Now, finally, Bush is ready to move, prompted by concerns about strategic command-and-control in the quickly disintegrating Soviet Union. The two most important items in the U.S. proposals are the de-MIRVing of ICBMs and elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and aboard ships. By proposing to eliminate MIRVs, the U.S. is specifically targeting the nuclear missiles stationed in Ukraine, since the majority of those have multiple warheads. In this conversation, Gorbachev responds to the American initiative enthusiastically and promises to give his response within a couple of days after consulting with Soviet experts.

The President: Mikhail, how are you?

President Gorbachev: George, hello. I received your letter. I very much want to talk.

The President: Good. First, I want to extend my cordial best wishes. I would like to go through the talking points and get a reaction to them.

President Gorbachev: OK. In general I discussed them with my colleagues from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and asked them to give me a preliminary analysis. I listened to the experts.

This is a major initiative of the President of the United States. That is my opinion, and that of my closest associates. There is only one thing: you are doing this unilaterally, and you call on us to consider our steps. Is that right?

The President: Yes. Correct. We’ll spell out what we do. In some categories, we’ll spell out how the Soviet Union could take similar steps. For example, we cancel ICBM’s except for single warheads, and would like to say that the Soviet Union is doing the same thing.

On dismantling nuclear warheads, where I propose we open discussions on the safe dismantling of nuclear warheads, on how we might enhance the safety and security of nuclear weapons, and how to improve nuclear command and control. I’d like to say you and I agree that this would be a good thing to do.

President Gorbachev: George, thank you for those clarifications. Since you're urging that we take steps, I can only give an answer in principle—since there is much that must be clarified—and that answer is a positive one.

The President: I understand. How about if I say that I've consulted with Mikhail Gorbachev, and although he has had no time to study my initiative, that I am inclined to believe his response will be positive.

President Gorbachev: I think that will be very good. I wanted to say that since you'll be talking at 8:30 our time, I could go on our news program "Vremia" at 9:00, mention that we've talked, and then on that program give a positive response.

The President: There's just one complication. I won't give the speech now until 8:00 p.m. our time—3:00 a.m. your time. I changed that because we wanted to be on prime time so that the majority of the American people could hear it.

President Gorbachev: OK, then I'll respond tomorrow.

The President: Very good.

President Gorbachev: There are certain points on which I have some questions. First, we hope that we will get more detailed information from you on each point. Is that agreed?

The President: Absolutely.

President Gorbachev: Do you have any intention to include other nuclear powers in this process? Are you calling on them to get involved?

The President: I consulted with Major and Mitterrand. I haven't asked them to be involved. We will take the lead. It is certainly our intention to consult further with them.

The response from Major and Mitterrand, with whom I talked just a few minutes ago, was certainly very positive. But I am not calling on them to do something now. This is more a U.S.-Soviet superpower relationship.

President Gorbachev: That's clear. In connection with your far-reaching proposals, is the question of nuclear testing included? It was one situation when we had many nuclear systems and programs. Not that you are contemplating major reductions, perhaps you consider moves on testing.

The President: We're reluctant on testing. Clearly we will consider the effect of our proposals on testing. We are not talking here about testing, and we will need to be in contact on that. Clearly it will raise the issue in the U.S. and elsewhere. We will need to consult on that.

President Gorbachev: OK, George. Another point which was not clear to us: does your initiative affect carrier-based arms control and the strategic-based nuclear [naval] fleet?

The President: Carrier based nuclear forces, definitely yes. The strategic fleet is not affected. Land-based navy planes will have their nuclear weapons removed from them and from their bases.

President Gorbachev: OK, thank you. In conclusion, I would like to know your view on the following question. What forum can we use to clarify the points that arise about the U.S. initiative? When you were here, we talked of setting up

a group to discuss strategic stability. Maybe that group is the appropriate one to clarify all remaining questions?

The President: That's an interesting idea. I like that. Let me get back to you soon. It should be broader than just military, but obviously the military should be comfortable with this.

President Gorbachev: OK. Thank you. I want again to congratulate you on this major proposal. It is a historic initiative, comparable to Rejkavik [sic].

The President: I also wanted to run it by Yel'tsin. I don't know where he is. He was on vacation, but I don't know where he is now.

We sent him the information. I would like to do the courtesy of calling him. If we miss him, tell him we tried.

President Gorbachev: OK, I'll do that George. I also want to say that I appreciated meeting with Jim and discussing with Brady the U.S. financial system.

The President: Thank you for the courtesy of receiving them. We're urgently trying to follow up on those conversations.

President Gorbachev: Thanks. I sent today information to Major for the G-7, including detailed data on the situation of our balance of payments, debt, and our possibilities. He will be in touch with you to give the information on my behalf.

The President: OK. I look forward to seeing it. I am very pleased at your positive response.

President Gorbachev: I'm sure. I glad [sic] to hear of your significant initiative. Raisa sends her best to Barbara.

The President: Thank you and thank you for sending that fascinating tape. I looked at it with interest. Thank you.

President Gorbachev: Thank you for the flag. That, too, is a reflection of that troubled time.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 146: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

October 5, 1991

Gorbachev calls Bush before his scheduled televised speech to announce the Soviet response to the U.S. nuclear reduction initiatives of September 27. In addition to accepting Washington's proposals, the Soviet leader is going to announce a one-year moratorium on nuclear testing, a reduction in the size of the Soviet army by 700,000 men and a goal of complete elimination of tactical nuclear weapons. He will also propose to start negotiating deeper reductions in strategic nuclear weapons, aiming for a 50 percent cut immediately after START I is ratified by both legislatures. While some of these proposals would later materialize in START II, negotiated with the new Russian government, the proposals to eliminate all tactical nuclear armaments would represent a major missed opportunity on the part of the Bush administration. By the time the U.S. was willing to put tactical weapons on the table, their Soviet counterpart could no longer deliver. Tactical arms remain a non-negotiable part of the current Russian arsenal and a great concern of the United States.

The President: Hello, Mikhail?

President Gorbachev: Mr. President? Is that you George?

The President: Mikhail, I didn't recognize your voice.

President Gorbachev: We generally say that if someone doesn't recognize you, you'll be a wealthy man.

The President: I hope so.

President Gorbachev: I'm glad to hear you. All these days, despite the considerable problems here, I've been looking into your initiative. I asked Pankin to send a written version of my proposal—which I will be announcing in about an hour—to Bartholomew. I wanted to give you a brief summary of the primary points.

I emphasize again the importance of this initiative by the President of the United States. I greet the approach of the President, focused on nuclear disarmament, unilateral actions, and an appeal for action.

In a concrete sense, in the area of tactical nuclear weapons, we are reacting adequately to the initiative of the President. At the same time we are developing initiatives to continue these trends.

We want to fully destroy tactical nuclear weapons on sea forces, on a mutual basis to withdraw tactical armaments of sea forces, including bombs. The weapons withdrawn should be stored at bases in nuclear stockpiles.

I also suggest that the other nuclear powers join the U.S. and the Soviet Union in these far-reaching measures.

I want to offer further confirmation for my past support for a speedy ratification of START. Also, in the strategic area I will announce the following initiatives:

- Heavy bombers will be taken off alert. Their nuclear arms will be stockpiled.
- We will cease the modernization of tactical nuclear missiles for bombers.
- We will stop the modernization of mobile, small-size, ICBM's.
- We will not increase beyond existing numbers those ICBM's on railroads.
- We will not increase the number of ICBM's with MIRVed warheads.
- All ICBM's on railroads will be kept in permanent places.
- We will take off of alert 530 ICBM's, including 134 MIRVed missiles.
- We intend to make deeper cuts than those called for in START, going to 5,000 warheads by the end of the period called for in START, rather than the 6,000 called for in the treaty.
- We propose the U.S. begin talks right after ratification of START to radically reduce strategic nuclear armaments, cutting by 50%.
- We are ready to discuss with the U.S. side their suggestions for creating a non-nuclear system of strategic defense. We suggest creating a common system for advanced prevention against "eventual" nuclear strikes.
- I will today announce another 1-year moratorium on nuclear testing, and invite the other powers to join us.
- I will also suggest to elaborate together with the U.S. a plan to stop the production of fissionable materials.
- There are other points—I won't list them all.
- We will reduce our army by 700,000 men.
- If you don't mind, I will be ready to suggest a new Summit may be on the horizon to discuss the situation.
- Those on the main points.

The President: Very bold. We'll look at the details when we receive them. I commend you on your forthcoming statement. This is very exciting. We will look carefully at every detail, and then get back to you to tell you our thoughts on all these proposals.

President Gorbachev: George, I think our experts have already started their talks. They'll be able to look at the details.

New spheres of cooperation are being opened. Some hours ago I talked to Yeltsin. He asked to transmit greetings to you.

The President: OK.

President Gorbachev: Regarding general problems, we are in quite an important phase now. The twelve republics have drafted an agreement on economic union. I plan to convene on the 11th a State Council meeting to finalize the agreement. Basically the draft is the one you know—the Yavlinsky Program.

Working with Yeltsin and the experts, we've prepared a new draft of the Union Treaty. It is now being circulated among the republics. There are many nuances here. The pressures are increasing on Yeltsin. I still get significant

confirmation that Yeltsin will follow the agreement we reached together. I know of your activities, they have been conveyed. I believe there is a common understanding here.

This morning I met with Michel Camdessus, Director of the IMF, and we exchanged letters confirming the Soviet Union as an Associate member.

All this means we have a lot to do here. I appreciate the support we are receiving.

Now, goodbye [sic]. Say hello to Barbara. In a few minutes I'll be speaking on Soviet T.V.

The President: Thanks for the courtesy of this call. Barbara and I are at Camp David. Tomorrow the King of Spain will be here. I will be following the coverage of your speech with great interest. I am sure it will be received well worldwide. Both of us have a responsibility to really do something for the generations that follow us.

Barbara just walked out of the room. She sends her very best to Raisa. I'll be in touch. Thanks for the call.

President Gorbachev: OK. All the best....

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 147: Scene Setter for Meeting with President Gorbachev

Circa Late October 1991

This succinct and prescient scene-setter, prepared most likely by Brent Scowcroft before the president's departure for Europe, describes Gorbachev's slow but steady loss of power and Yeltsin's aspirations for independence that "would destroy what's left of the Union." The prospects for a political union with Gorbachev as its head, therefore, "seem nil," implying the possibility that this could be the last of the "U.S.-Soviet meetings." The memo advises the president to focus on nuclear arms control but not to go into detail, and it correctly identifies points that Gorbachev is likely to raise on the topic. The memo also lists the steps the Bush administration has taken to support market reform.

This could be the last "U.S.-Soviet" meeting, and possibly your last with Mikhail Gorbachev as President of the USSR. Events are moving so fast, and power devolving so quickly to Russia, Ukraine, and other republics, that Gorbachev may soon totally lose the influence he has enjoyed.

Power is quickly flowing away from Mikhail Gorbachev. His effort to create a voluntary economic union has produced a vague agreement to set up a "commonwealth" based on 27 other yet-to-be-negotiated agreements. Even that vague agreement has failed to attract Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia or Moldova. And while Russia has joined, its leaders are increasingly drawn to declaring independence, which would destroy what's left of the Union. While Yeltsin and Gorbachev have worked closely together much of this year, that arrangement may soon end as Yeltsin asserts Russia's role as successor to the Union.

Prospects for a political union, and therefore a long-term role for Gorbachev as union president, seem nil. Gorbachev has indicated a desire to discuss with you the current economic and political situation, and he will most likely describe a somewhat more orderly and optimistic scenario for the creation of a new, voluntary, union.

Gorbachev retains some role in foreign and defense policy, and you will want to discuss those areas with him. You can refer to the letter you just sent expressing your pleasure at his very positive response to your September 27 initiative, but avoid detailed discussions since that letter covers the main points. He may press you on a nuclear test ban, and renew his call for 50% reductions (below START) in warheads. You may wish to explore his views on the republics and nuclear weapons, and about how the evolving center-republic relationship affects the ratification of START and CFE. Finally, you should press once again on the illegal biological weapons program.

You also can report to Gorbachev on the measures we are taking to normalize relations with the union and the republics, and to support market reforms:

- Gorbachev complained at the Summit about COCOM limits. You can assure him that the remaining limits are few, and that you have removed some that still exist.
- Gorbachev wanted IMF involvement in the Soviet economy, and now he has it. You can discuss with him ways to make the best use possible of that aid.
- You can assure him of our leadership in the G-7 efforts to solve Soviet debt problems, and ask him to urge republic leaders to work closely with the G-7.
- Gorbachev is concerned about food and medical shortages this winter. You can tell him we've taken the western lead on both accounts. We delivered \$2.5 billion in agricultural commodities in 1991 and over \$18 million in medical supplies.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-1202-F/2 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 148: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Luncheon Meeting,
Madrid, 12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

October 29, 1991

This is the two leaders' first conversation on the eve of the Madrid summit, which formally opened on October 30. Gorbachev is upbeat and in a joking mood with the U.S. delegation. As the previous scene-setter memo suggests, his aim is to present the domestic situation in a more optimistic and positive light than is warranted. He reports to Bush that the economic agreement he has been advocating for has been signed by 12 of the 15 republics and that the new Union will also include a single army and a centrally controlled foreign policy. Bush is concerned about nuclear command-and-control issues given certain recent statements from Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Gorbachev reassures him in the strongest terms that "everything regarding these weapons is 100% under central control" and that there is "no intention to break up into national armies."

President Gorbachev: This is a great occasion. It was probably difficult to arrive at this point in the conference, yet even more difficult times are ahead. Everyone, of course, has an agenda.

Jim Baker must be an honorary citizen of some of the Middle Eastern countries he visited, and of the Gaza Strip.

Perhaps we will want to add some additional thoughts on these issues. I understand today that there was an attack against an Israeli bus.

President Bush: Dennis (Ross), is there anything more on that?

Mr. Ross: Nothing much more than yesterday.

President Gorbachev: Perhaps we should clear up what really happened before linking it with the conference.

President Bush: No one believes we should stay away and let the perpetrators succeed.

President Gorbachev: This is a good location for the conference.

President Bush: Choosing the conference site was an interesting process. There were so many places that were off bounds because one or another party vetoed them. The Syrians vetoed the Hague; the Palestinians, Geneva.

President Gorbachev: You spent the night on the plane.

President Bush: Yes. I left after dinner with the Queen of Thailand. Barbara did not come.

President Gorbachev: Please convey my warmest regards to her. I saw a picture of you talking to me on the phone at the end of the coup, with Barbara standing beside you.

We'll be able to talk more about that later.

President Bush: Have the perpetrators gone to trial?

President Gorbachev: No. This is a very complicated matter.

President Bush: Yanaev was my host on the trip to Kiev.

President Gorbachev: I know.

President Bush: It is more complicated when you knew someone.

President Gorbachev: How do you think I felt? Yanaev was my friend from university days, 40 years ago.

This just demonstrates how far we've changed our country. There was a big difference between his understanding of the situation and mine.

President Bush: It was stupid to try to overthrow you.

President Gorbachev: This is what generals do sometimes (pointing to General Scowcroft).

President Bush: Are you pointing to Scowcroft?

President Gorbachev: But I mean bad generals.

President Bush: If Brent Scowcroft wants my job, or Baker's for that matter, he can have them.

President Gorbachev: I don't want to abandon my job. This is a crucial time. We've left everything behind, and to leave now would be to leave the country in a grave situation.

All the superficial things you see are on the surface—decisions, speeches, etc. They are not the crucial things. Speeches are not what we need today. The issue is how we actually make the transition to a market economy. It will be difficult. The social situation is very tense.

But there is also a change. People are ready to accept hardship, if they believe there will be a better life.

President Bush: I remember the last two times we met, you said that change is irreversible. Of course there will be bumps along the way. This may be an improper question, but do you have a concern about a second attempted takeover.

President Gorbachev: I still think we have more chances, better chances, on our side. We just had a congress of workers from the entire country. I received a delegation from the congress. They're for the market. Most represent large factories. The first step they believe is to give shares to the workers so that they can share in the control of profits. They are ready to work in a market situation.

They said that if we'll do that, then they'll support us in everything. Even in the defense industry, they're ready to accept reforms.

If we move decisively, in coordination in our country, and also with your support, we'll get the situation in hand.

But there might be real bumps, especially with the price liberalization. We need to struggle to resolve the myriad of challenges: 1.) price liberalization, 2.) a stable financial situation, that is, an anti-inflation policy, and 3.) stimulate entrepreneurs to start producing, to fill the market with consumer goods.

We signed the economic treaty. Yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on debt. Yesterday and today I had calls from Moscow on this. It has

been difficult, but they signed it. This morning I have a memo on my table about the agreement.

The meeting between the G-7 Deputies and the Prime Ministers and Finance ministers of the republics was very useful for our country. I heard it was also important for the G-7. It was useful for us to learn, and to work in association with other countries.

President Bush: You were satisfied at the outcome of the meeting with G-7 representatives?

President Gorbachev: Yes.

President Bush: Ambassador Strauss filled us in on his conversation with David Mulford. I gather twelve signed.... Bob?

Ambassador Strauss: Mr. President, ten signed it yesterday...

President Gorbachev: All twelve signed. Also there will be additional discussions with the Baltics because they hold a portion of the debt.

President Bush: The Balts will never accept collective responsibility for all the debt of the USSR.

President Gorbachev: We'll talk. I have set up three delegations to talk with the republics, led by Sobchak, Yakovlev, and Shevardnadze. They will discuss the entire range of problems with the Balts. Increasingly they (the Baltic leaders) are reminding us of the need for cooperation.

President Bush: One area I'd like to talk to you is in working together on nuclear issues. I don't know if you got my letter, but I discuss there the whole concept of working together to guarantee security and safety of nuclear weapons.

We see half way around the world republics making certain statements about nuclear weapons. I'd like to hear your view. This is a situation where the center has a role, and you have a stake.

President Gorbachev: George, a lot of what you hear in the press is not reliable. The press may have a duty to say such things, but....We will talk in detail about the domestic situation.

The voices you sometimes hear, even in the Ukraine... that's not the real Ukraine. For example, they criticized the economic treaty, saying that they would not sign it. Now they will sign it.

I don't need to tell you what an election campaign means. Some people overreach in the process. Kravchuk says one thing one place, another in other places.

President Bush: When is the election?

President Gorbachev: December 1. Please be patient. Even Kravchuk has left no doubt on his position about the central control of nuclear weapons. The same is true of Nazarbayev. You need have no concerns. Everything regarding these weapons is 100% under central control. No one can come close to nuclear weapons outside the central command.

Yeltsin talked yesterday about the need for a common army. This [sic] an agreed point we have followed for a long time. That position on a common army is in the draft union treaty which Yeltsin and I sent to the republics. There is no intention to break up into national armies. We will talk more later.

Secretary Baker: One of my jobs is to move the Senate to ratify START. We testified that this was going well. Then the Ukraine announced a 450,000 person army. Senators then ask, "What does that mean for the Kiev Military District?" I can't answer. This may be simply posturing in the style of democrats in the U.S. It's Strauss' fault.

Minister Pankin: He's (Strauss) doing that now in Moscow.

Secretary Baker: He's used to it.

President Gorbachev: The President made the right choice (in Strauss).

Ambassador Strauss: I'm the only real democrat.

Secretary Baker: That's "Democrat" with a capital "D."

President Gorbachev: I understand that what Ukraine has said echoes in Congress. The President may even have heard reports about discussions of a possible nuclear exchange between Russia and Ukraine. I worry how that is perceived.

There will be total clarity in this as a result of military reform. Whatever variant we take, the Armed Forces will be under my control.

I am also convinced that there is no other way regarding our foreign policy.

But for both foreign policy and the armed forces, the single control will be implemented giving much more of a role to the republics. If, for example, the republics implement some specific policy, then that's better; it makes it possible to implement agreed-upon policies. I'd like to discuss more in our conversation.

Please bear this in mind: we are establishing a new state. Actual responsibility in the country and interaction with our partners—we'll find an optimum solution to all our partners, consistent with our interest and that of all our partners.

Above all, we want to put an end to the totalitarian regime. This is our responsibility, our prerogative. You also wanted us to put an end to that regime. Until recently you, and many in my country, thought the changes were going too slowly. But we needed to prepare our society for these steps. All must understand that this is not an easy process. There will be mistakes in strategy and tactics.

Some believe the current stage is "funereal." But I talked with an entrepreneur, a well-educated man, who is head of an association of joint ventures. He said, "Mr. President, you always say "crisis, crisis." But how else can you destroy a totalitarian system without crisis?

I fought Pavlov, who proposed an "anti-crisis" program. How can you eliminate totalitarianism without a crisis? When Pavlov proposed an anti-crisis program, he was saying he was against changing the system. We sat around a table and listened to him. He was serious. He believed the kind of state we had was normal. But it had to be dismantled.

It reminds me of a story from medieval times. A traveler sees something being built. One said to him—we're carrying huge stones, which should be the work of slaves. Another said, we're building a cathedral. This is a time when you can hear all kinds of views in our country. There are democrats of all kinds in the country, and they now have a chance to implement real change. It is important now to preserve what was created after August.

President Bush: There is no danger of going back to the August events?

President Gorbachev: No. Things cannot get back to that stage. The real danger is unrest stemming from the dissatisfaction of the people. People are for reform. Those who attempted the coup opposed reform, the union treaty, indeed all we were trying to do. They could not accept the new kind of life, the new society. Our people in general are in favor of change, the market economy.

President Bush: I'm worried about the army and dislocation problems.

President Gorbachev: That is a problem. On October 21 I proposed for people released from the army that they get free land and a loan to develop that land. But there are even more basic problems. The army is just part of the problem.

Well, I think they have served us all the food they are going to serve us.

Ambassador Strauss: Before we go I want to thank you for your hospitality to me in Moscow.

President Bush: Yes. Thank you very much for what you've done for Bob Strauss.

President Gorbachev: We've never had that late-night supper and long chat I promised. I won't delay much longer.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 149: Memorandum of Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, Private Meeting, Madrid, 1:20 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.

October 29, 1991

Meeting again prior to the start of the Madrid Conference, Gorbachev and Bush engage in a private conversation (Scowcroft, Baker, Chernyaev and new Soviet foreign minister Boris Pankin with interpreters from each side are present), giving Gorbachev the opportunity he has been waiting for to be able to explain his concerns to Bush directly. The two begin with a discussion of the upcoming summit, which they agree is “unprecedented” in that the superpowers have managed to work together to bring all parties in the Middle East conflict to the negotiating table. In the Middle East, in Yugoslavia, in Cyprus, their joint efforts are producing real results. However, the main issue here is the Soviet domestic situation and Gorbachev’s urgent need for financial aid. The day before, Yeltsin delivered a key speech to the Russian Supreme Soviet asking for emergency powers to implement radical economic reform. Bush expresses concern about his intentions and poses a perceptive question: “Does Yeltsin’s Russia want to take over the center?” Gorbachev points to the republics’ reactions to Yeltsin’s earlier statements about frontiers and Russian ethnic minorities, remarking that it stirred “separatist movements and talk about Russian empire.” Still, Gorbachev is generally positive about cooperating with Yeltsin and even about his speech—although he may simply be engaging in wishful thinking. The Soviet leader makes a desperate bid for loans, repeating the plea several times during the conversation. He needs \$10–\$15 billion and emphasizes that [i]f the current crisis escalated then we—you and us—will pay much more later.” But Bush and Baker are not focused on “later”; the president notes that Congress has its eye on Chicago, not the Soviet Union, a reference to the upcoming presidential campaign. The U.S. is willing to provide only \$1.5 billion and even that would have to be earmarked for agricultural and medical assistance.

President Gorbachev: Let’s spend a couple of minutes over how to organize these talks. I have two or three days myself.

President Bush: As do I.

President Gorbachev: I suggest a couple of areas. First on the Middle East Conference. I have a couple of problems. We need to talk in detail on our internal situation. Not only on the economic situation, but what we are doing now.

President Bush: This is fine. We can’t cover everything, but why don’t you start?

President Gorbachev: On the Conference, I will be brief. It proves again the kind of cooperation we have been able to achieve over the past couple of years. Some ask whether it is worth it now to cooperate with the Soviet Union and what Gorbachev represents? I must note here your balanced attitudes on this question.

I think we still have much work to do together. The assets we have deployed together over the past period make us see that cooperation is preferable. Through our efforts, especially Baker's, we now have a beginning for this unprecedented Conference. My impression is that we must be cautious and that the participants will doubt a need from time to time to continue.

Not that we should work instead of them, but we are facilitators of the process. We should given [sic] them a chance to work for themselves.

I spoke with the President of Cyprus. He hopes you and I will find a way to solve that Cyprus problem. This was my first meeting with him. He seems a serious man.

President Bush: He's a very good man. We hoped for progress, but then the Turks pulled back.

President Gorbachev: He said that now that we are working together, we should remember that the Cyprus situation was created by force and should be solved not by force, but by negotiations. In other situations we have not put up with force.

In Yugoslavia the situation is of much concern. They seem unable to engage in a political process, despite assistance by all. I don't know if you have considered raising this in the UNSC. Maybe we should think about it.

President Bush: Some believe this is an internal matter and that the UN should stay out.

President Gorbachev: External intervention is inadmissible. But taking a principled stand would be useful.

President Bush: The Security Council did pass a resolution not too long ago.

Secretary Baker: Now there is no effective central government.

President Bush: We're open-minded. Let's keep talking. Did your talk with the leaders offer any hope?

President Gorbachev: They went back with promises of cease fire and good offices.

Secretary Baker: The UNSC did impose an arms embargo, and it seems to be effective.

President Gorbachev: This is a bad precedent for this to happen after the Paris CSCE conference.

President Bush: Yes. The EC is not united on this issue.

President Gorbachev: Yes. Some were hasty in saying there is no more Yugoslavia. That is not helpful. Maybe we should have additional exchanges on this. CSCE may not be able to continue if we can't deal with this.

President Bush: May I say a word about the Conference? We appreciate your role, especially with Syria and the Palestinians. We must continue to work together with the Syrians to attend the multilateral conference, and ensure that the Palestinians not mess things up. If we are to succeed, we must stay together.

President Gorbachev: I agree. Should we react to the terrorist act? We'll get a question.

General Scowcroft: We have to understand it first.

President Gorbachev: So we could do that, and say it is an attempt to scuttle the conference.

President Bush: I see two problems. We need to encourage Syria to participate in the organization of a multilateral meeting. The other is the site for the follow-on conference. The Arabs want Madrid. Israel wants everything to be done in the region. We need a compromise formulation.

President Gorbachev: Today we can focus on this in the talk with Shamir. We shouldn't focus solely on this or the issue of multilateral talks. We need a balance.

Secretary Baker: But we either need to start in four days or we might not start at all. Rhetoric in this conference will be extreme.

President Gorbachev: It is a question of Golan, 242, and the Settlements.

President Bush: These are all tough issues. I will say all must think anew.

President Gorbachev: There will be nothing new in my remarks. Shall we move to the second topic?

President Bush: Are you coming to the Reagan Library opening on November 3?

President Gorbachev: I got a letter from him. He is a charming man.

Now, about our domestic problems and where we are. On the surface much is happening. The question is how to end the crisis. The only way is to accelerate reform—market-based political and economic freedom.

There must be a single market. Awareness of this is growing. The central question is the future of our state. After August there is a running debate and statements by reporters of declarations of independence, which didn't change anything. They are just a prelude from which to take steps to voluntary association.

Some reacted to Russian statements about frontiers. That spurred support for separatist movements, and talk about a Russian Empire. It was a bitter dispute.

It was difficult to reach a stage of a joint statement by 10, but the process is now launched. The treaty has been signed in the form developed by Yavlinsky. Some have said it represents a return to the center, but cooperation requires some sort of collaboration.

Ukraine said it will shortly sign the economic treaty. We worked with Yeltsin on the draft union treaty and have sent it to the republics. It calls for a unitary state, not a free commonwealth. It will have central institutions and foundations. It will have control over areas of energy, transport, communications, and R and D. We have responses from most of the republics. Nazarbayev suggests the center be stronger, and others agree. Yeltsin has comments, but the process seems to be on its way. The State Council will meet on November 11 to discuss it.

Yeltsin is under severe pressure by those who support a different concept. People who think Russia should shed other republics and go ahead alone. Yeltsin understands what that would mean. Russia then would be in a period of upheaval and other republics would be in a state of chaos. Other regimes would rise—even Yeltsin could be jettisoned. Yeltsin understands, but he is easily swayed.

His speech had two parts. On the economy he stuck to our agreed approach, although on some questions he was a bit rash. That's not too dangerous because he follows a path to economic reform. So that is a positive part of the speech. It was a dramatic and brave decision—not his usual populism. It is difficult for him, but he did it. I spoke to him yesterday and said I would support that positive part of the speech.

But the rest of the speech was worrisome. Although he reaffirmed support for the Union, he retreated on some issues in the union treaty. He also made some rash statements on issues of great importance. Still I will give him support because he is pushing reform.

President Bush: Does Yeltsin's Russia want to take over the center? We can't see over the horizon.

President Gorbachev: That is a direct question. That was happening when I returned from the Crimea. That worried the republics and the democrats. It took a big effort on my part to hold the line. That process was stopped. I helped Yeltsin to get out of his box by accepting the decisions he made during the coup. His present situation is not entirely calculated. Today a new union gives form to Russian leadership of the republics. They can't accept direct Russian direction. Most republics support a center. He and I had a good understanding about this, and his speech was somewhat disappointing. If he goes to separatism that would be a disaster for all.

My view is we will find an optimum solution for the economic and political treaties. I am working with each republic on this. A crucial time for us and the West is approaching. What kind of Soviet Union is wanted? You need to take a clear stand and put forward a program of support.

Yavlinsky called last night. He told me that the G-7 had done careful work and would report to their heads to make final decisions. I request you to take the initiative and accept that decision. What is it? \$370 million in cash needed today. One billion financial credits expected from Saudi Arabia and Korea. Finally, \$2.5 billion is needed for standby in case of need, and to deal with dangers in this critical situation.

You all understand what is happening that the implications. But now this seems to be a brake [unreadable words] yesterday they did sign a MOU on foreign debt. [Unreadable words] point.

President Bush: Let me be [unreadable words] know my position has been support for [unreadable words] not exclusively—and you. In [unreadable words] to that effect which was sharply criticized. [Unreadable words] reckless nationalism. We maintain [unreadable words] others—not behind your back. Many worry [unreadable words] Yeltsin speech meant, and how good the credit [unreadable words].

Our law requires certification [unreadable words]. The G-7 saw good signs of intent to [unreadable words] creditworthiness are desperate. How can we [unreadable words] don't know yet. In our view we can do something [unreadable words] the republics to participate since they [unreadable words] for something

less we have to deal with G-7 [unreadable words] situation is worse than expected. So we [unreadable words] need additional assurance the republics are involved.

President Gorbachev: The MOU is just that. The republics have recognized the debt, and declared responsibility for it. They authorize the central bank to do it in their behalf and all will provide for servicing the debt and its obligations.

Let me be very frank. \$10–\$15 billion is not much for us and repayment is not a serious problem. If the current crisis escalated then we—you and us—will pay much more later. You mention the demands of Congress and Treasury. In a routine situation that is sensible. But in this crisis situation, routine decisions are not possible. Political decisions are required.

President Bush: That is why I asked you about the possibility of a reactionary coup. Another new element is my situation at home. It is not like yours, for which I am grateful. But the Democrats forget foreign affairs, and focus on Chicago, etc. Congress says, how can you certify the credit? We must put it on the line as a medical and agricultural credit.

I can't say what your need is—only you can. I can tell you what I *can* do now: \$1.5 billion for the winter while you sort out the union-republic situation. If that is insulting to you, I will go back and consult and see what might be done. But if you want something now, I can do this for two reasons: it is agriculture, and the republics are now involved, so credit is better. It is something we can start with. But if that puts you in trouble at home, maybe we should just defer. But I can't do more right now.

President Gorbachev: We have two problems. The food crisis exists and we hope for \$3.5 billion before the new harvest. Second, we need decisions regarding the work of the G-7 experts.

President Bush: What is the second?

President Gorbachev: The G-7 agreed about the current debt payout situation. \$370 million cash to continue; faster action by Saudi Arabia and Korea for \$1 billion; and, last, \$2.5 billion standby. We will invite the IMF and the World Bank to supervise our activities in the use of our credits. The G-7 representatives have all the necessary data. The main G-7 worry was the need for a MOU of joint responsibility for foreign debt and a judicial person to be responsible for it. That has been done.

Secretary Baker: The President is talking about \$1.5 billion—\$165 million in grants; \$250 million in credits now, and \$1 billion in 60 days. The President says that is what the U.S. can do now. It doesn't get into project aid like food processing, etc. People can't eat projects. This is really all we can do now.

We want stability. You remember our telling you in June of a possible Pavlov Coup. We heard disturbing reports on this speech last Friday (he describes them). We went to Russian officials and questioned this. We think we had some effect. So we are doing what we can. If we knew where the speech does not accord with your union agreement, maybe we could help you on that.

President Gorbachev: They all want to show they can handle with contacts with the U.S. It is a messy situation. I think we can handle it. I am confident, but it won't be easy. That is why I am so insistent in raising the aid issue now.

President Gorbachev [sic]: We will talk to our G-7 counterparts when I get back.

President Gorbachev: On Arms Control we can say we examined the issues. On aid why don't we say we had a full discussion of all aspects of the current situation and we will continue after we have heard a report from the G-7 deputies.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 150: Record of Dinner Conversation between Gorbachev, Bush, González and King Juan Carlos of Spain

October 29, 1991

This dinner conversation hosted by King Juan Carlos the evening before the Madrid summit becomes a virtual love fest as the king, Prime Minister González and President Bush take turns expressing their wholehearted support and appreciation for Gorbachev and his efforts to preserve the Union in a new democratic and decentralized form. It evolves into a fascinating discussion of the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union as it slides toward collapse. After the Soviet leader presents his detailed vision for the new Union and describes the scale of the challenges facing him, Bush sums up Gorbachev's predicament as a "stunning, breathtaking drama." González calls for preserving the Soviet Union as a "second circle," without which "there will be no important pillar of stability in Europe and in the world."

About one-fourth of the conversation is devoted to the personal relationship between Yeltsin and Gorbachev; the three Western leaders were shocked by Yeltsin's recent speech to the Russian parliament the day before, where he essentially announced that Russia would initiate a separate reform process and cut its financial support for the center. Gorbachev attempts to make lemonade out of this lemon, speaking positively about Yeltsin and his speech, and observing that the Russian president falls easily under the influence of others but that his heart is in the right place. He goes on to name the source of negative influence in this case—Yeltsin's secretary of state, Gennady Burbulis, whom Gorbachev believes was the author of the idea of Russia going it alone and thus destroying the Union.

The four leaders also discuss the ethnic complexity of Ukraine, with its population of 15 million Russians and strong separatist movements in the Crimea and Donbass, as well as Kazakhstan, which they do not believe can exist without the Union. While all express their preference for a strong center, Bush reflects on his preoccupation—the electoral campaign, which has the "striking ability to distort" the issues, and which he thinks about "with horror."

Gorbachev. Tomorrow we are opening a conference that has become possible as a result of the end of the "Cold War." The road to success will be difficult. Terrorist acts²⁵ are an effort to disrupt the conference. But we must do everything to keep the participants in place. Today I spoke with [Yitzhak] Shamir. After we raised the question of the necessity of holding bilateral negotiations here in Madrid, he agreed that we could start them here.

Bush. I did not know about that. This is a step.

²⁵ Separate deadly incidents occurred in the West Bank, Lebanon, and Turkey on the eve of the conference. [Editors]

González. We are saying that the conference, in the end, should “give birth to a baby.” But of course, at least a “conception” should happen here. Overall, we must note that all sides have now come to the conclusion that they cannot, that it is not in their interest, to leave the conference.

Bush. Shamir is a very difficult partner. We took very serious measures with respect to credit assurances; [we] were not afraid of the Jewish lobby, on which he counts; [we] were not afraid of all his sharp expressions. Now he is at the conference. But it will not be easy with him.

Gorbachev. When Shamir started telling me that we should hold bilateral negotiations in the capitals of the countries of the region, so that he would be close [and] could participate personally, give instructions and so on, I said—why should we, Mr. Prime Minister, create a situation like this? If we conduct negotiations in the region, there will be more emotions, more pressure from the press, from public opinion. You will often have to play on the “other’s field.” Wouldn’t it be better to play on a neutral [field]? In general, we are trying to “work” with him.

Bush. This is good. We will strive to have the participants of the negotiations themselves carry as much as possible of the burden of responsibility.

Gorbachev. As we stated at the press conference: we brought the parties to the negotiating table, and we have no intention of disappearing now. But the main responsibility is on them now.

Bush. Tomorrow I will make a mainly boring, general speech. Hope you don’t fall asleep. I will call for a constructive [approach].

Gorbachev. I said to Shamir: you are the first to speak, and we are counting on you to introduce a constructive tone. I am not going into details tomorrow. Notwithstanding all our internal difficulties, we are full of determination to play a constructive role in the world. And when we create the Union of Sovereign States, it will become a powerful positive factor in the international arena. But we are facing a serious struggle. The coup-plotters have seriously undermined the future of the Union. They said they were going to save the country. And some people in the press are throwing out the question: where are the real patriots now: walking free or in jail?

Juan Carlos. Does this really have resonance?

Gorbachev. Yes, it finds a certain resonance. There are still many people who believe that democracy and the Constitution are good, but the main thing is that there should be order.

González. For decades people were injected with a negative attitude toward “formal democracy.” The actions of the coup-plotters are an example of how these kinds of people are destroying something they allegedly wanted to save. Nobody encouraged the centripetal tendencies in the USSR as much as they did. Meanwhile Europe and the world need the Union. Two main circles are being created in Europe—one is in the West leaning toward the EU. The other should be in the East. It is the current Soviet Union, the Union of Sovereign States, for which you stand. If there is no second circle, then there will be no important pillar of stability in Europe and in the world. This would be a dangerous vacuum.

Gorbachev. I am constantly saying: we need the Union, we must not tear the threads that were created over the centuries. But our partners in the international arena also need the Union. Because chaos and constant instability in our country will create a threat for everybody. And I will do everything to preserve the Union, of course a renewed one with extensive rights for sovereign republics, but at the same time with the kind of center they need, that would serve a single economic space, ensure defense with unified armed forces, ensure a coordinated foreign policy and everything that one should not disrupt—a single power grid, transportation and communications, ecology, etc.

In our country now many people think that we can separate and then come together again, that it would be sufficient just to have free association or a commonwealth. But I will insist on a full-blooded Union, I will not abandon it.

Bush. We are all concerned about this issue. What are the chances, in your view, that you will succeed in realizing your vision? How do you see the actions of the Ukraine? And how should one understand Yeltsin's latest speech? By the way, [Marlin] Fitzwater informed me that the first reactions of the mass media in the United States to our joint press conference came under titles like this: "Bush supports Gorbachev and turns his back on Yeltsin." I don't know, maybe he dramatizes the situation, but it would be bad if they succeeded in creating such a perception. You know that nothing like that happened. And at the press conference I tried to emphasize the need of cooperation between the center and the republics, even though there were questions posed in a different spirit.

Gorbachev. Yes, I appreciate it, George. I am convinced that we should not allow a situation where Gorbachev and Yeltsin are pitted against each other.

Bush. You promised today that you would tell us all about this in detail in the evening.

Gorbachev. Yes, it is not easy to figure it all out. In my analysis, I separate Yeltsin's speech into two parts. The first one—this is the part that deals with the economy. Here, even though there are some moments that could cause objections—there are things that are voluntaristic, without mechanisms for realization (but that is just objective reality, and we are working on those now)—still, here we should emphasize the positive. In fact, this is within the framework of what I was talking about at the Supreme Soviet; it develops and adds concrete details to certain stipulations. He talks about the need for financial stabilization and price liberalization. These are painful measures, and he has finally decided to pursue them. And I will support him. Because he—let's give him credit—takes responsibility for the radical, painful steps. And we really cannot do without them. The other part of the speech is political. He called me yesterday, and we discussed some of it. He asked what to say about Ukraine. I suggested that he should say that we keep hoping that Ukraine will be with us, in the Union, and that's what he said. In the speech, there is confirmation of the need for the Union, it says that Russia will not destroy the Union, but there are also things that lead away from the agreements that were affirmed in the draft of the Union Treaty, which he and I sent to the republics. And the majority of the republics supported that concept, and sent us their considerations. Yeltsin has also sent [his].

Juan Carlos. I understand, the situation is complex. But here everybody noted the political aspect, and first of all the call for cutting the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs by 90 percent. One has to think about how such things are perceived abroad!

González. This is, so to speak, a metaphor. But a unified state cannot exist with such a “metaphor.”

Gorbachev. I fully agree with this. And that is why I am saying that we are facing a serious struggle, because I am calling not for an amorphous union, not for an amoeba, but for a union state. And in the draft of the Union Treaty, which Yeltsin and I sent out, it says so: union state. There are some things in the speech that lead away from that.

Bush. And he called me, he said that he wants to tell me about the substance of the speech, assured that it would be devoted to the economy, said all the good things. But he said nothing about the other part of the speech. How can that happen? I don’t understand it.

Juan Carlos. Mr. President, maybe it sounds harsh, but our relationship allows me to ask you this question—isn’t he clipping your wings?

Gorbachev. I would say that is not the right question. The problem is somewhat different. I think that in his soul he is sincerely in favor of the Union, he understands that not a single republic, not even Russia, can live without it. And this realization finds its expression in the fact that he works in contact with me; lately we have been working very closely together, working very intensely on the Union Treaty. However, he—even though he creates the impression of a strong and confident person—in reality he falls under influences very easily, in particular under the influence of certain forces, of people who are saying that Russia should throw off this burden, the republics are only a hindrance, the union with them is unprofitable, and that we need to go forward independently. Hence the idea that Russia should take upon itself the status of legal heir of the Soviet Union. And this idea, even though in a veiled state, in a form of denial, showed up in the speech. And one of the people who accompanies me here, Yegor Yakovlev, said: upon reading this speech, one can say that Yeltsin is going to try to destroy the Union, but in such a way that he could shift the blame to the other republics. But this way is dangerous, deadly. And that would be trouble for Russia.

González. I think he would want to shift [the blame] to the other republics and to the center.

Bush. But who are those forces you were speaking about? Who are these people?

Gorbachev. [Gennady] Burbulis, for example. He is a person with great influence on Yeltsin. And when a leader falls under influences so easily, it is hard to do business with him. Here, Mr. President, you were vice president for eight years, and now you are in your fourth year as president. We have known each other for a long time. Tell me, has there been at least one time when I gave you my word and did not keep it?

Bush. No, it has not happened once.

Gorbachev. A politician can not always give his word, but having given it, he has to keep it. Yeltsin—such is the reality we have to live with—is a person who is not always reliable.

González. Exactly. I remember talking to him during my visit to the Soviet Union. He started by saying that the center is a nuisance to us, that they did not need the center and so on. I tried to persuade him that Russia needs the Union, and the Union cannot be without the center, and in the end he agreed with me. After that conversation I went to the Kremlin for negotiations with President Gorbachev. When I arrived, I learned that in the meantime Yeltsin had been talking to the press and said just the opposite, perverted everything.

Gorbachev. Yes, this is the kind of person we are working with. Such is the reality. Honestly speaking, you cannot let him go for one day. You work with him, come to an agreement, and then it turns out that you have to start everything all over again. But I do not want us to be completely disappointed in him. I will work with him. All in all, if you consider his speech yesterday as a whole, the positive elements outweigh [the negative ones]. There is, first of all, the readiness to undertake decisive steps on the economy, affirmation of a single monetary system, and so on. This is important, this is the first time he is talking about what needs to be done. Today, it would be a big mistake to go for a fight, for a confrontation with Yeltsin. And I will be working with him, and with other leaders of the republics. By the way, they all want to work directly with you, to establish contacts, to emphasize their relations with you. And this gives us an opportunity to let them know of a certain position. I can see that you are not indifferent to how things will turn out in our country.

Bush. Yes, I received Kravchuk and [Kyrgyz president Askar] Akayev. We do have contacts with the republics, and we are trying not to undermine your positions. And I always say that we are interested in having the republics find agreement with the center, we want to help you, and for this it is necessary that you come to an agreement. And of course, there are the military issues, disarmament, and nuclear weapons. I always emphasize President Gorbachev's role. And when Ukraine started to make statements on these issues, this caused great worry.

Gorbachev. Yes, these are serious issues. But we have to have in mind that politics gets in the way here, electoral calculations. On December 1, Ukraine will hold presidential elections. After that, a lot will change, I think. They already realized what impression they had created with their "outbursts" regarding nuclear weapons and the Ukrainian army.

Bush. Yes, senators are asking what kind of a new army of 450,000 men they are talking about when we need to ratify the CFE Treaty.

Gorbachev. However, you have to keep in mind that whatever Kravchuk is saying (and he is saying different things—one thing in the Crimea and another in Kiev), and whatever the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet is adopting, this is not the same as the people's opinion. I am convinced that the people of such a multinational republic as Ukraine will ultimately make a decision in favor of the Union because we cannot simply separate from one another in a country where

75 million people live outside of their ethnic units. There are 15 million Russians in the Ukraine, according to the most conservative estimates. Only 40 percent of Kazakhstan is Kazakh.

Juan Carlos. Only?

González. Kazakhstan as such is just nonsense.

Gorbachev. Apart from the Union, yes. And that is why Nazarbayev is firmly pro-Union. We never had any internal borders. How is it possible to divide oneself, how do you cut up everything? Ukraine in its present form emerged only because the Bolsheviks did not have a majority in the Rada, and they added Kharkov and Donbass to the Ukraine. And Khrushchev passed the Crimea from Russia to the Ukraine as a fraternal gesture. And when talk started about the secession of Ukraine, then a powerful movement against that began in the Donbass, in the south, and in the Crimea. The Crimea finally made the decision that either Ukraine will be in the Union, or we are returning to Russia. Kravchuk went to the Crimea, tried to calm them down. The situation is made even more difficult by the careless statements of Yeltsin and his circle about borders and territorial claims. This is an explosive topic.

González. All this proves that in the modern states the notion of self-determination cannot be taken to the absurd. Secession is absurd. To what degree can one divide up? Up to self-determination of a town? That would be the logical result if one starts splitting up.

Bush. You are saying that Kravchuk is maneuvering before the elections. But will he be able to win? Many people in my country think he would not.

Gorbachev. I think he will win the elections. He tells me: wait until December 1; after the elections I will be able to speak definitively.

Bush. And you think that after the elections he would definitively speak in favor of the Union?

Gorbachev. I am not sure of that. But I am firmly convinced of one thing—it is not possible to tear Ukraine and Russia apart—they will be together.

González. Of course, it is impossible to tear Russia from Russia, it began in Kiev.

Gorbachev. Many things today stem from the immaturity of our politicians, who emerged on the wave of *perestroika*. These are very different people. I look at them: here is a person who yesterday put all his energy into the service of the old regime, was its passionate proponent, and now he is an ultra-radical, a passionate demolisher of the center. And that is not before August, but now, when all the totalitarian structures have been swept away. There is no longer a center that would personify those structures. And they continue fighting against it.

González. This is a typical example of a “pseudo-discussion,” an argument without a subject. How can they now fight against the center, as if nothing has changed? This reminds me of a joke about the president of Colombia, who, upon coming to power in 1980 announced that he was breaking relations with Spain. He was asked: why? He [said:] because Spain stole our gold. Yes, they say, but that happened 500 years ago. That is right, he says, but I just found out about it today.

Gorbachev. Or the joke about the man who was still blowing up trains in Belorussia twenty-five years after the war. He was caught and said: I am a partisan. But twenty-five years have gone by, you are blowing up the wrong things.

González. The problem is that the republics see themselves as possessing substantial legitimacy, because they recently held democratic elections. Of course, your main problem is time, the objective *zeitnot*. But you were also being undermined by the sequence of events. If the same kind of elections were held simultaneously or earlier at the all-Union level, then maybe the situation would be different now.

Gorbachev. This is only partially true. The first free elections were held in our country in 1989, when people's deputies of the USSR were elected. And the majority of individuals who now are playing the leading roles in the republics, in the districts, emerged then. And that sequence was justified by the fact that our changes started from the top.

Bush. I agree with that.

Gorbachev. But this is not the main thing. Our society will not be able to bear such a split, such destruction. I am sure of that and I will be doing everything for the Union. And not for any Union, but for a full-fledged one. Once I said exactly this to the presidents of the republics: if I see that we are moving not to a unitary union state with a popularly elected president, with a single economic space, unified armed forces and so on, then I will not enter the race as a candidate for the presidency, I will have to separate myself from it. I think that there is a chance to create a full-blooded new union where the republics would enjoy genuine sovereignty, but where Russia will play a special role. It has objectively the leading, forward role. But now the republics do not accept any direct leadership. The only opportunity for Russia to fulfill this role of hers is through the new center, where all the republics would be represented and where Russia, due to its weight, potential, and capabilities would be able to realize itself, to lead the others. In this, one could say, lies its historic mission. But as I have already said, we will have to fight for this.

Juan Carlos. And you believe that you will be able to win in this fight? We are with you with all our hearts.

Gorbachev. I think that there is a chance, and I am confident that we should achieve it. And I speak about it openly. When Shushkevich announced his candidacy for the position of chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus, he consulted with me, and I told him: "You are not some kind of politician who has nothing else to do and who does not know any other trade. You are a physicist, a professor, you can come back and lead an institute. What do you have to lose? Therefore, I suggest that you state [your position] clearly, what you stand for." And he stated clearly: for the Union. And he got almost 70 percent of the vote. And his rival, a strong person, by the way, only got 25 percent. And I declare clearly and definitively: I am for the union state. There will be struggles, it will be hard, but I will work with everybody, individually and all together. And if I see that the other concept is winning, then I will speak about it, and I will not be president.

But I repeat—we have a chance to create a union state, a new [state], with strong republics, but above all a democratic [state].

González. Democratic, but necessarily with a strong executive. Strong [executive] power of course is not a sufficient condition for the existence of a democratic state, but it is a necessary condition.

Gorbachev. I absolutely agree with that. For us today, it is a serious and very difficult problem, and I have been speaking about the need to strengthen executive power at all levels for a long time.

González. If one talks about the United States, there the foundation of strong federal power is in the fact that 60 percent of government spending is done at the federal level. And the decisive instrument of executive power is the presidential veto power. It is, of course, a marvelous instrument. And more: you can win elections by a margin of one vote, issue the veto with a margin of one vote—and nonetheless, this decision would be respected, complied with by everyone, without a sound.

Juan Carlos. It is not like that yet in our country. They say that only a sizable majority is persuasive.

González. You see, Mr. President Bush, how we are jealous of your system. However (the King is probably not listening), I have to admit that the monarchy has served the interests of contemporary Spain quite well. I, as a person without any “monarchic inclinations,” can say it openly.

Juan Carlos. I heard what the chairman of the government just said. We are talking about a monarchy of a modern type. But the press needs topics, and so they try to “pour acid” into our relationship with the head of the government all the time, to depict us as rivals.

Gorbachev. Many people in my country are trying to do just the same—to put a wedge between me and Yeltsin. There are people, there are forces, who are interested in it and are working on it all the time.

Bush. And I have to face the coming year—an election year. I will tell you honestly—I think about it with horror. We have a striking ability to distort all the issues, to waste time on the issues that are not really important during electoral campaigns. You never know what will fall down on top of you. Of course I do not want, Mikhail, to compare these concerns with the gigantic task you are trying to solve today. It is a stunning, breathtaking drama. We are holding our breath as we watch it unfold, and we wish you luck.

Gorbachev. I see in your words, Mr. President, an understanding of the fact that the preservation and renewal of our Union, the solution to our problems—and they can only be solved within the Union—is necessary not just for ourselves, although for ourselves first of all. It is important and beneficial also for you, for our Western partners, for the entire world. That is why I was telling you today in our conversation that now, during the particularly difficult, decisive period of transition from a totalitarian political and economic system to a democracy and markets, we especially need the support of our partners. It is getting late already, so I will speak very briefly about one more issue. I am meeting with President Mitterrand tomorrow.

Bush. Give my special regards to François.

Gorbachev. I will pass them on, by all means. It is likely that I will have to respond to his proposal regarding a meeting of four nuclear powers. What do you think about that?

Bush. He did not talk about this with me personally, as strange as that is. We know about this idea, we might have some questions, but he did not address me.

Gorbachev. We have some questions too. For example, why is China not mentioned, what should we do about it? We need to think how to react to this idea of Mitterrand. There are things there to weigh and maybe to discuss.

Bush. It is really a question—regarding China.

González. There is one important thing behind this idea of Mitterrand—he is feverishly seeking a way to finally leave behind De Gaulle’s idea of “strike forces.” Some movement in that direction was noticeable some time ago. But you know how to do it beautifully? You know, when one person lies on a bed, and he suddenly changes his pose, everybody notices that. But when there are four or five people lying on that bed, one can make all kinds of body movements unnoticeably.

Gorbachev. That is a good way to put it. By the way, Mr. President, your allies—the British and the French—got alarmed when I agreed to discuss limited ABM systems with you. They started feeling uncomfortable, afraid that creation of such a system would devalue their own nuclear forces. And they are concerned that the Soviet Union would abandon its position on the ABM Treaty. We, of course, support this treaty, we think that it has contributed greatly to stability.

Bush. I know that they had certain questions. We consulted with them. I still think that we will not have a big problem with them, we will be able to explain everything to them and remove their potential concerns. I reconsidered the concept of SDI, and now we are talking about a genuinely limited ABM system.

Gorbachev. Well, it is really late, and tomorrow we will have a big day. I think it is time to thank his Royal Highness for the wonderful evening and the magnificent dinner.

Juan Carlos. I was very glad to be the host for such company. Thank you for the very interesting conversation. We all gained a lot from it. Mr. González and I, of course, would like to join President Bush in wishing you, Mr. President, success in the great cause of transforming your country.

Gorbachev. Thank you for these words of support.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1, donated by Andrei Grachev. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

Document No. 151: Chernyaev Diary

November 2, 1991

Once again, the best chronicler of the “stunning, breathtaking drama” (Bush’s phrase) unfolding in the USSR is Anatoly Chernyaev. In his descriptions of the meetings in Madrid, which provide crucial details missing from official memcons, Gorbachev’s closest adviser captures the most important and poignant moments of the summit. For him, the critical meeting is the conversation with Bush, Baker and Scowcroft on October 29 (see Document No. 149), where Gorbachev delivers his unrequited plea for help. This entry in his diary reveals an episode left out of the U.S. record, in which Baker informs Gorbachev of “one thing that the President cannot say,”—namely, that the American side learned about the contents of Yeltsin’s October 28 speech to Parliament beforehand and contacted Yeltsin’s people to express their disapproval of it, specifically the intended “call to liquidate the Soviet Foreign Ministry” and the ominous statement about protecting Russian minorities abroad. Yeltsin went ahead with the speech anyway, to the surprise of the Bush administration. Chernyaev relates the back-and-forth about aid in minute detail, again going well beyond the official memcon. In the latter part of this entry he describes Gorbachev’s visit to Latche, France, to meet with François Mitterrand, which was in part a debriefing about Madrid, and in part, as Chernyaev looks back on his notes, a “bequest ... or if not a bequest, then parting words to political descendants.”

November 2, 1991, Saturday Morning

What happened in Madrid?

Before the start of the conference on the Middle East, Gorbachev and Bush, the co-chairs of the conference, talked thoroughly about everything in the presence of Baker, Scowcroft, Pankin. I was there too.

M.S. started by praising both of them—this conference is another example of the effective partnership between the USSR and the U.S. in world politics. For M.S., this is especially important at a moment when, as he told Bush himself, both here and in the U.S. people are asking: does the Soviet Union exist, and what does Gorbachev represent? He expressed his appreciation to the President and to Baker, and to the U.S. Administration for the “balanced approach” in this matter.

They agreed on behavior tactics for each of them and for both of them together during the opening of the conference and afterwards: to act in a way so the sides (the Arabs and Israel) assume the responsibility for resolving these issues, as opposed to shifting this on the superpowers.

M.S. agreed and said that he recently met with the President of Cyprus in Moscow. He called him a good person (with which President Bush agreed) and relayed the Cypriot’s request: “to demonstrate (U.S. and USSR) a joint commitment to resolving the Cyprus problem.” “We cannot allow the use of force (by

the Turks)," M.S. said. He relayed Vassiliou's opinion that if things remain the same, it would set a bad precedent. M.S. commented on this information by saying that in other similar cases we would not accept the use of force.

That was the end of the discussion of the Cyprus problem.

They discussed Yugoslavia, establishing that the situation is deteriorating. M.S. suggested returning to the Yugoslav issue at the UN Security Council.

Bush reacted skeptically, along the lines of: some members of the Security Council and staff of the UN Secretariat believe that it is an internal affair, and they do not want to get the UN involved.

Gorbachev agreed that intervention is unacceptable. "But if the UN states its position, it could have certain consequences."

"The UN has already stated its position," Bush objected, "We support the EC's [European Council] efforts. You spoke with representatives of Serbia and Croatia. Do you think it was helpful?" he asked, not without a hint of malice.

Baker joined in the conversation, "Regrettably, there are disagreements among members of the EC as well. It is difficult for them to maintain a unified approach. Some Europeans want to recognize the independence of the republics. I tried to oppose this, but Germans ran ahead of us."

"I also spoke about this with Kohl when we met near Kiev," M.S. noted. "I am worried about this. After all, we are not talking only about Yugoslavia. How can we continue the European process, if we can't solve problems like these?"

"Let's keep in touch on this matter," Bush concluded.

What the American president and secretary of state were impatient to hear from Gorbachev, and what he himself wanted to share with them, were our domestic affairs. "Today, the main question for us is how to recover from the crisis," Gorbachev began. "We need to speed up the reforms and move ahead on the path of political and economic freedom, within the framework of a common market economy for all the republics."

"The central issue," he explained, "is statehood. The August events spurred the desire to declare independence. But, they did not change anything in principle," Gorbachev declared, to my surprise. "They only created the foundation to move toward the creation of a truly voluntary Union of Sovereign States. Yeltsin spoiled the situation when he brought up the territorial question of boundaries. This strengthened the separatist tendencies in Ukraine. They started talking about Russia's imperial pretensions.

"Under these conditions it was difficult to work out a joint statement of the '10+1.' But gradually, the process got underway. The economic agreement, developed under Yavlinsky, is the beginning of the center's rebirth. It will be a new center." He said he was certain that Ukraine will sign the agreement.

"Together with Boris Nikolayevich, we are conducting major work to reform our State. We prepared and sent to all the republics a draft Union Treaty. We are talking about creating precisely a union state, not some association or community. It will be a state with unified armed forces, a coordinated foreign policy, and a unified market. The Union will be responsible for a unified energy system,

transportation, communications, ecology, essential research and some other areas. On November 11th the State Council will review the draft, subject to comments and amendments.

"Unfortunately, Yeltsin is under pressure from certain people who claim that Russia must shed the burden of other republics and go forward on its own. I spoke with Boris Nikolayevich and he assured me that he understands what this would lead to. It would result in great difficulties for Russia, it would mean several years of turmoil. For the other republics it would be catastrophic."

"For the other republics?" Bush asked with some surprise.

"I repeat, it would cause serious shocks even in Russia. And Yeltsin understands this, but unfortunately, he is influenced by a certain kind of people. Analyzing his speech from yesterday, I see two sides in him, two parts. One side confirms the position for the Union. The other side moves away on some specific issues from the provisions included in the draft Union Treaty, on which we worked together. He makes rash, biting remarks about statehood. Obviously, it will cause a reaction from a number of the republics.

"But on the whole, I have to support him right now. Because if reforms start in Russia, they will start in the other republics as well."

"The key question is this," Bush interrupted. "Do you think that Russia, and Yeltsin, are trying to take over the center? What do they want? Do they want to narrow even further the role of the center, and your role? This makes it difficult for us to determine positions. We are having a hard time making sense of the situation."

Gorbachev acknowledged that such attempts are taking place. But he is certain that Russia needs a new Union center. This is the only legitimate format through which Russia could have a leading role in the republics. They will not accept direct control from Russia. That is why they support a Union center. The majority of them support a general election for the president. "I thought I had an understanding with Yeltsin about this. But his last speech is disappointing. If he isolates Russia and destroys the Union, it would have devastating consequences for Russia. I," M.S. said, "remain optimistic. I continue working with the republics together and separately. I would like to emphasize: today it is a fundamental, life-changing question not only for us, but for the West and the United States as well. You have to make a strategic choice. Right now we need support to continue the reforms, for the future of the Union depends on it, the kind of Union that I am convinced the United States and other countries need."

Turning to specifics, M.S. asked [the American side] to decide the question of a food credit for 3.5 billion dollars and debt payments. For the latter, we require emergency assistance in cash in the amount of 370 million dollars, plus the financial loan from Saudi Arabia and South Korea (1 billion).

"I think we all understand," M.S. pressed, "what is at stake. What happens with the Soviet Union will have repercussions for the entire world process."

In response, Bush made a telling speech, which I will try to reproduce in detail (especially since it helped when writing it down to hear first the English version and then the translation).

"I will be extremely frank with you," Bush started. "I hope you know the position of our government: we support the center. Without giving up contacts with the republics, we support the center and you personally. Even before the coup, I made a speech in Ukraine, for which I had some price to pay at home. I was criticized for allegedly 'selling' Ukraine. Of course, there was no such thing. But I spoke out against mindless nationalism.

"We maintained contact with Yeltsin and will continue to do so, as well as with leaders of the other republics, but we are not doing it behind your back. I asked this question because in the Congress and in the administration, many people were surprised by his speech, they cannot understand what it means. The issue of the Soviet Union's creditworthiness is tied to this matter.

"According to our laws, I have to attest to Congress that our borrowers are creditworthy. I cannot circumvent the requirements of our legislation. We believe that we can meet you halfway with loans, but not fully. We must have confidence that the republics are fully aware of their responsibilities. We want to help you, but we need certain additional guarantees regarding the republics' positions."

Gorbachev interrupted. "Let us speak frankly. Ten-fifteen billion dollars is not such a great sum that we would not be able to pay it back. If we miscalculate right now, we will have to pay a much higher price down the road. We are not talking about something ordinary and routine. We are talking about an enormous country that is going through great transformations, and routine approaches are unacceptable here. References to the Congress and experts do not convince me. We need a political solution."

Bush: "I want to assure you of our understanding. That is why I am asking you once again: do you consider a return to a totalitarian regime a possibility? This would be bad for the entire world, and for the United States, because it would put an end to our fruitful cooperation."

"Precisely for this reason we need concrete action," M.S. chimed in.

"Nevertheless, I have to take into account public opinion at home in the U.S. I cannot argue with the figure you named for food credit. But we cannot fully satisfy this request. Right now we can make a decision only to allocate an agricultural credit in the amount of 1.5 billion dollars, and a part of it would be available now, while the second part only after January 1st. We hope that this will help you to get through the period when you finally decide the relations between the center and the republics.

"You know how strongly Secretary of the Treasury Brady spoke in support of the Soviet Union at the IMF session in Bangkok. It even irritated other members of the G-7. If you prefer that this question is not discussed openly right now, let's do that. A billion and a half is the maximum we can do right now. We could come back to the question of an agricultural loan later, when the republics' level of participation is more defined. But the present sum should allow you to get the process started.

"I don't want the announcement of a sum that may seem inadequate to cause you difficulties at home. Perhaps it would be better not to announce anything,

but this is the maximum that we can provide at this time. And while Secretary of State Baker can sometimes work wonders in Congress, we have to be realistic.”

After assurances from M.S., James Baker took the floor. “Allow me to make a general statement. I think you know that we support and will strive to continue to support your efforts to reform the Soviet Union. You know that we influenced the other donors, particularly Saudi Arabia. The president in essence went as far as providing direct U.S. government loans, which means they are guaranteed in full. We believe now it is necessary to have the republics’ signature on the loan documents. This will give the president the legal basis to raise the issue before Congress.

“At the moment we can provide approximately 1.5 billion dollars: 250 million as a gift in food aid and provided free of charge. The rest as credit guarantees. Out of that, 250 million would be available right now, and 1 more billion in 60 days. This is what we can do right now.

“With regard to new projects on food, we will pursue them, but they will not give a quick effect. We understand that our proposal does not fully cover your needs. But in these circumstances, this is what we can do.

“I will tell you one thing that the president cannot say. You know that we were in contact in June of this year, when there were rumors of Pavlov’s coup. We stressed that we are interested in the stability of the Soviet Union, and in letting the Soviet people determine their own future. And we believe that this is a significant argument to show that we understand the need for a Center. Last week we received alarming signals about the content of Yeltsin’s upcoming speech, including the fact that there will be a call to liquidate the Soviet Foreign Ministry, and a statement that Russia will protect Russian minorities wherever they might be, etc. We appealed to RSFSR officials and asked: what is happening, why is such a speech being made on the eve of a peace conference on the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict? This would undermine the Soviet Union’s efforts. We expressed the hope that it would not happen. We were surprised that on the question of minorities there was no mention of the Helsinki process. It appears that the republics will be concerned, and you will have to regulate this process. We will try to do something from our side; it is possible that we may be able to help in some way. We would be interested in receiving specific information on what parts of the speech deviate from the agreements you reached in the development of the Union Treaty.”

“Yeltsin called me the day before his speech at the Parliament of Russia and did not say that the speech will have controversial positions,” Bush noted.

“He said only good things,” Baker added.

“You must take into account,” M.S. explained, “that the leaders of the republics want to demonstrate that they have contacts with the U.S. president, they want to play this card to satisfy their ambitions. I think we can straighten out this situation, it will be a challenge. But that is why I am raising the question of food credits and financial support so persistently. I need it right now.”

“I would just ask you to consider that I am in a different situation than I was before. Of course, I will speak with our representative at the G-7,” Bush summed up. [...]

The trip to Latche (October 30)—President François Mitterrand's farm in the Pyrenees. This was a remarkable event in many respects. I looked at my notes a week after the event and saw that they look like a bequest... or if not a bequest, then parting words to political descendants. I have a duty to record as much of it as I can recall. [...]

There were only a few of us with Gorbachev: Raisa Maksimovna, Andrei Grachev, myself, the interpreter, and security. The rest of the people who accompanied him to the conference in Madrid flew directly to Moscow from Spain, or were dropped off on the way to Latche in the district town of Soustons. [...]

"We are in the most critical period right now," M.S. said. [...]

"In the context of the global situation, I put the question this way: what is the West interested in, what is the world interested in? That the Soviet Union continue to exist. Reformed, democratic, dynamic, economically healthy—in other words, completely new—but a Union."

"What I think about it," F.M. started to respond, "you already made the decisive action, you destroyed the system that had been out of order for a long time. Your second action is this desire to resolve the issue of the Union and the republics. A certain mentality has formed that creates a centrifugal tendency. It is encouraged from the outside. France's position is not to succumb to opportunistic circumstances. I am using absolutely cold reasoning: it is in France's interest to have an integral force in Eastern Europe. If there is a collapse, we will go back to what you had before Peter the Great. It would be a historic catastrophe and would contradict France's interests. [...]

I am for your country's rebuilding in 2–3 years on a federal-democratic basis. This is the best scenario for the rest of Europe. [...]

"France will not contribute to the centrifugal forces. And I think," F.M. said, "that this position is shared by all old European countries with long history, which have ancient traditions and deep European experience. I am talking about England, France, Spain, and Portugal."

"The people at home should know the positions of the main actors of world politics on this key issue," M.S. responded. "Last night the Spanish King hosted a dinner for me and Bush. González was present. At this dinner, he fiercely defended his point of view, which is similar to what you told me right now, for a few minutes even forgetting the protocol and that the King was present."

"They unanimously expressed surprise at some passages in Yeltsin's speech at the Congress of the People's Deputies. Especially over the idea that the MFA should be reduced tenfold, which would call into question the very need for a common foreign policy mechanism for the Union. At the press-conference before the King's dinner, President Bush took a very strict position and very clearly expressed his support for the Union policy."

"This is very good," F.M. said, "I remember how in April of last year Bush and I met in Miami, and the conversation touched upon the Baltic problem. I told him then: yes, the Baltic States have to become independent. This is a position of principle. But do not rush to recognize them. We need to give Gorbachev time

for constitutional reforms. Everything must be done consistently and gradually, not vice versa. Bush supported this approach, even though it was very difficult for him, because the Congress and the public demanded an immediate recognition of the Baltic States. So President Bush understands the situation well.

"Bush supports a democratic Union, and its incorporation into the global economy. But he listens to public opinion and he is cautious, while from all sides people whisper in his ear: don't lose, so to speak, you have elections coming up. I keep telling him: a new Union in Eastern Europe is an issue that has to be viewed globally, not in the context of a political situation. Preserving the Union is a vital issue for Europe. It seems that I have his understanding on this point. But Bush is somewhat indecisive and cautious."

"I have told Bush repeatedly," M.S. joined in, "that this is an extraordinary situation and that we must not act in a routine manner, but take into account the uniqueness of the events. I think he understands me. After all, he decided to offer us a large food credit."

"I understand that to deny you substantial aid right now would mean to make the process of reforming the Union very fragile."

"If," M.S. summarized, "it is our common goal to have a new Union as the largest bastion of democracy and peace, then we must not waste time on trifles. Especially because we are not talking about handouts. Everything will be returned. But we need the help right now, right this moment." [...]

The second conversation took place over an evening meal in the other chalet, which served as the dining room and bedroom. The composition of the group was "extended": Raisa Maksimovna and Danielle, Danielle's sister, the Mitterrands' youngest son, Gorbachev and I, and Pierre Morel—F.M.'s adviser. [...]

"... Of course, you know," F.M. moved his thought in a different direction, "that the Americans are tempted to extend the functions of NATO and turn it into a political, rather than military, alliance. I take a different view on this subject. I think that NATO should continue to remain faithful to the foundation on which it was created. If NATO was vested with functions that are in principle under the jurisdiction of the CSCE and the EC, it would be very bad. The European process was largely made possible by the concerted efforts of the Soviet Union and France. You, of course, remember that France was practically the only country to support your initiatives in the sphere of European cooperation. Our collaboration yielded good results. So let us not allow the fruits of our cooperation to be eliminated. If we give NATO excessive powers, the non-NATO members will feel ill at ease. In addition, the role of the Paris Charter for New Europe will decrease."

Responding to M.S.'s remark about the U.S.'s European role, Mitterrand continued his verbal essay: "Europe is also America. This situation will persist for some time. I agree that the U.S. will continue to play an important role. It's simply the recognition of existing realities. But in the future, Europe should be in Europe proper. It is important that the transformations in the Soviet Union contributed to the politico-economic rapprochement between East and West, and the creation of what you call the common European home."

“A great deal here depends on how America sees the future united Europe, and how it sees Japan,” M.S. joined the conversation. “These are two sore spots for the Americans, especially if we are talking about Europe as the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains. After all, this is a vast expanse with almost 600 million inhabitants, and with enormous scientific-technical, economic, and intellectual potential. This is where we should seek the answers to the major questions of world politics. This is also where we can find the answer to the positions of different countries on the changes in the Soviet Union; including an explanation to the adjustments that can be seen in Germany’s European policy. I am talking about what recently came up in the Baker-Genscher statement. This is also why Germany supports the new idea for NATO, which you mentioned earlier. It is not impossible that the Germans are planning to increase their influence in the East this way, and get a free hand in regard to Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and further east.

“...This is my view, and it is tied to my assessment of the future. There are two pillars. One of them is the European Community, which is acquiring a system of political institutions. The other is a Union of sovereign states on the basis of the former USSR. There is also interaction between them within the framework defined by the documents of the European process and disarmament agreements. The roles and presence of Europe, the USA, and Canada fit into this concept. But this has to be a European policy, not an American policy towards Europe.

“Of course, it would be important to have the support of both these pillars,” F.M. supported the idea. “But one of the pillars has been created already. As for the other pillar, it is still not clear what exactly is happening. If all the people in your republics (and that’s almost 300 million people) were Gorbachevs, then the issue would be resolved.”

“That’s fine,” M.S. laughed, “This is how I understand the task before me: I have to strengthen the second pillar.”

“We also want this,” F.M. cheerfully assured him. “Did you notice that in my statement for the TV cameras I just spoke in favor of a Union that is strong, cohesive, and reinforced by federal ties? This would be very important not just for your countrymen, but for the interests of France, and Europe in general. France will never, under any circumstances, encourage the destruction of the Union. Under Stalin, this position was fraught with certain problems. But even then, at the time of de Gaulle and Stalin, France and the USSR were allies. This is even more important now, when your country is becoming truly democratic.” [...]

[Source: *Chernyaev, Sovmestnyi Iskhod, pp. 1004–1011. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 152: Memorandum of Conversation, Bush–Yakovlev,
Washington, 3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

November 19, 1991

After the coup, Aleksandr Yakovlev, Gorbachev's long-time aide who resigned from the CPSU just days before the putsch (which he predicted), returned to the president's side, as did Eduard Shevardnadze, who agreed to serve again as foreign minister. During this meeting with the American president, Yakovlev talks about the situation in the country after a pivotal State Council meeting on the Union Treaty on November 11. Although Ukraine signed the economic agreement, final decisions will be made after the December 1 presidential elections and independence referendum in Ukraine. Yakovlev is concerned about the ethnic picture in the republic where the populations of Crimea, Donetsk, and the most important industrial areas are heavily Russian and have already expressed separatist tendencies. On nuclear weapons in Ukraine, he reassures the president of the reliability of Moscow's system of central control. He also speaks positively about the working relationship between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, but shares his real concern about the viability of Russian economic reform. Bush expresses support for both Gorbachev and Yeltsin but laments the isolationist mood in his own country—"like 1938"—which he claims places limits on his ability to provide assistance.

Mr. Yakovlev: Thank you very much for receiving me. First I wish to hand you a letter from a good friend of yours.

The President: (reading from the letter) Gorbachev met with Lew Preston, and signed an agreement with the World Bank. He visited with Strauss. He comments on the Crowder/Hewett mission. I won't read it all now, but I'm delighted to have it.

Mr. Yakovlev: Mikhail Gorbachev asked me to inform you on our country now. The last meeting of our State Council was radically different from previous ones. It was a dramatic change in mood. I was not particularly anxious to be present at earlier meetings because I didn't want to be disappointed. I said that to Mikhail Sergeyevich, and he told me to be patient.

This meeting was much different. The question of nuclear weapons, was resolved. Yeltsin took a very constructive position. He spoke on the economic treaty, and also on defense policy. He agreed that there would be no republican armies. He spoke on foreign policy, and changed his previous position.

Yeltsin was named as head of a working group to submit a proposition for changing the foreign affairs apparatus, combining foreign economic and foreign affairs departments. Before I left for this trip he had presented to the State Council a proposal to sharply decrease the staff of the foreign affairs bureaucracy by:

- closing trade representations, moving instead to have enterprises themselves handle trade representations;
- cutting diplomatic staff by 32%–33%, both at home and abroad; and
- changing the policy process by including people from the union republics in the process.

The President: How will you decide what republics get what embassies?

Mr. Yakovlev: By different means. Some republics want a minister in the Soviet embassy—Russia, for example. The embassies will have a Russia department.

The U.S. is a special case here, since all republics are interested in being represented in the U.S. Beyond that, the southern republics are more interested in the muslim [sic] world.

The position of the center is strengthening a little bit, within reasonable limits. The announced decision to close 70 ministries was a shock. But then we began to receive from republics proposals to maintain one ministry or another. That's psychology.

We'll make use of that psychology. All republics agreed to a single committee on culture. That's really strange to me. I would have closed that one first. But the republics thought differently.

About mood: Mikhail Gorbachev's mood on November 11 was much improved. Of course, he was always an optimist. But I know what's in his mind. Now his mood is really improving. Of course he is really worried about Ukraine. Something unreasonable might embarrass him.

The President: What will happen after the elections in Ukraine?

Mr. Yakovlev: They signed the economic treaty, the food treaty, and have worked with the G-7. But I want to say something else. Mikhail Gorbachev must have discussed the national question with you: there are 12 million Russians in Ukraine out of 50 million. Donetsk has declared its autonomy. The Crimea has the intention to have a referendum on becoming a republic independent from Ukraine. All industrial areas of Ukraine are populated by Russians—Donetsk, and Kharkov. Chornovil wants to be independent. [...]

The President: It depends on what "independence" means.

Mr. Yakovlev: No one knows. Unfortunately we have at least 1000 different understandings of "independence." No one knows.

The President: One concern is the weapons. How do you see that working out. Control? Ratification? Safe dismantling. How will Kravchuk approach these?

Mr. Yakovlev: Don't expect risks, unexpected steps. They'll look to the west, watch for western reaction. Of course, we won't give up our weapons. They're guarded by central authorities.

Secretary Baker: But some troops have moved over to the republics.

Mr. Yakovlev: I know some of the colonels may talk very demonstratively. This doesn't mean they actually will act as they talk.

There may be a solution to this. Maybe we can discuss it at some level in the future. We probably can destroy some types of weapons in Ukraine. [...]

The President: Domestic considerations are important here. The Baltics were a powerful issue. Now it's Ukraine. There are a lot of Americans with great interest. Also, we're getting it from Croats. They want us to go to "general quarters."

Secretary Baker: What happens when Ukraine declares independence? Do the Russians say no? Next is Armenia's declaration of independence.

Mr. Yakovlev: It will be a mess. There probably will be no civil war in Ukraine.

Secretary Baker: Are you talking of the Russians in Ukraine?

Mr. Yakovlev: There are 12 million of them—many in mixed marriages. There are 25–30 million mixed marriages. What sort of war could it be?

Secretary Baker: A normal war. What happens when Russia starts charging Ukraine the world market price for oil?

Mr. Yakovlev: This is "rope pushing" now. Yeltsin learned that Ukraine was selling oil for dollars. So Yeltsin cut oil production.

[Yakovlev and the President look at a map]

Mr. Yakovlev: Ukraine will be very small.

Dr. Hewett: Will Russia recognize Ukrainian independence?

Mr. Yakovlev: Yes. [...]

I frankly don't see what liberalizing prices will bring us. I said to Yeltsin that freeing prices without competition is dangerous. Yet demonopolization is not moving ahead. The problem is what happens after the ministries are disbanded. Take, for example, the metallurgical industry with 1100 enterprises. None of them have started to restructure yet. They're still producing the same old products, but selling at prices three to four times higher than before.

That means economic laws won't work. And in the current social and economic conditions, it is especially difficult. The peasants don't need money, so they won't sell. There are no goods.

Yeltsin did what Ryzhkov did: he announced price changes ahead of time, and people hoarded. Yeltsin understood what he did after the fact, which is too late.

I am especially concerned about Moscow. All revolutions begin in the capital, as do all counter-revolutions. The law of political dynamics suggests that if this fails, a dictatorship will appear. I said this on Soviet television.

The President: What about Yeltsin's frame of mind? Is he worried now?

Mr. Yakovlev: Yes. He understands the situation better now. I meet with him personally. For the first time he is criticized as sharply as Gorbachev. He's not used to it. When he was criticized by the party press, he was proud. Now it is a different matter.

But he feels strong now. It was a big disappointment that the Congress of People's Deputies did not support him on Chechen-Ingushetia.

In short, he is facing the reality Gorbachev faced long ago. It has brought them close. They talk every day; seek each other's advice. They have frank conversations (I see them).

The President: We're trying hard from here to deal with both. I'm not writing off Gorbachev; nor am I either elevating or downgrading Yeltsin. I'm not

intervening. I want to have respectful relations with both—and not blind-side one of them. Here I am criticized for being too much for Gorbachev. I don't want the Russian people to misunderstand... It is a delicate matter.

Mr. Yakovlev: I know. You told us before...

The President: I hope its [sic] properly perceived by Russians. I'm trying to be balanced.

Mr. Yakovlev: Gorbachev and Yeltsin will never be friends. But that's not necessary. They can have good business-like relations.

I have good relations with Mikhail Gorbachev and Yeltsin. We had differences some time ago, but not now.

The President: Does Shevardnadze have close relations with Yeltsin as well as Gorbachev?

Mr. Yakovlev: I don't think I would call Shevardnadze's relations with Yeltsin close, but they respect each other. They are both strong characters, and both have a strong hand. [...]

The President: [...] I wish you well, I repeat. We want you to succeed. We will try to help. If you need to be in touch...

There is a mood of isolation now in people. It's stupid; not in our interest. Pull back America—it's almost 1938. I'll be caught up in the election the whole year. It makes it a little more difficult to help. [...]

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 1999-0304-F/1 by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 153: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 9:01 a.m. – 9:37 a.m.

November 30, 1991

Just one day before the Ukrainian referendum on independence and presidential elections, Bush calls Gorbachev to clear up the unpleasant situation that has resulted from a leak regarding Washington's readiness to recognize Ukrainian independence. Gorbachev expresses his disappointment mildly in this conversation, saying only that the revelation "was taken negatively. It appears that the U.S. is not only trying to influence events, but to interfere." In fact, some in Gorbachev's circle regarded Washington's attitude as a betrayal. Here Bush attempts to explain his position on Ukraine, outlining the main U.S. interests, including centralized control of nuclear weapons, and expressing hope that a sovereign Ukraine would be more amenable to cooperation on creating a new Union. Gorbachev reiterates his desire for a viable political union and reminds Bush of their last conversation in Madrid where Western leaders expressed their preference for preservation of a unified and reformed Union.

The President: Hello.

President Gorbachev: Hello, George. I am glad to hear your familiar voice on the phone.

The President: I'm calling on a matter of some concern regarding Ukraine. I have read statements on the Soviet side that concerned me, and I'm sure you're concerned.

President Gorbachev: George, I am glad that you initiated the conversation. I regard this as a continuation of our discussion in Madrid.

The President: I would like to run through some talking points I've worked out with Jim Baker and Brent Scowcroft, and get your reaction.

President Gorbachev: OK, I'm ready to listen and take notes.

The President: First, I want to commend you on mediating the Azerbaijan-Armenia dispute. It is very good, and we commend you for that.

President Gorbachev: We will try to take precisely that approach to end that conflict. But it is hard to expect immediate results. The differences are large.

The President: I know. Now, on the Ukraine. Everything points to an overwhelming vote supporting independence. Worldwide this will be a powerful signal, really a celebration of the new atmosphere created when the attempted coup was put down.

You know our tradition as a democratic nation. We must support the Ukrainian people. But we want to do so in a way that encourages a peaceful transition to a new order, built on a productive relationship with the center, and a friendly Ukrainian-Russian relationship. We don't want to inadvertently create difficulties for you or Yeltsin.

But if the referendum turns out as anticipated, then the only question is when and how we and other countries recognize Ukrainian independence.

It would seem to us that recognizing Ukrainian independence could well bring them back into the union treaty process. When you remove any question about accepting their sovereignty, then they can participate without concern that doing so somehow signals their lack of independence.

Look, if we move towards recognition, I would need to be clear that arrangements are made providing for the following points:

- collective, central control over nuclear weapons;
- a non-nuclear Ukraine, which is signatory to the NPT (the Non-Proliferation Treaty);
- respect for human rights, with equal rights for minorities; and
- the implementation of existing treaties (the START and CFE treaties).

We will also continue to urge the Ukrainian government to implement market reforms, and to accept responsibility for its share of the Soviet Union's debt.

I am asking Jim Baker to send a special emissary to Kiev to begin discussions on these points and others. We want a cooperative relationship with Ukraine. This emissary's discussions will help us determine our next steps.

We will be making a statement shortly after the referendum that explains our approach. The statement will also note our desire to work closely with you and President Yeltsin. Obviously we will not say that we are recognizing Ukraine until these matters are worked out.

I have not yet talked to Yeltsin. Clearly I want to do that. I am also consulting with NATO allies on our approach to the new situation.

These are the key points. I'd like to get your reaction. Ambassador Strauss conveyed Shevardnadze's concerns here. I hope what I've said allayed those concerns.

President Gorbachev: OK, George. I'll try to say something. What we are discussing is of key importance, not only for our relations, but also for the future of the union. It is something of interest not only for people here, but also in Europe and the entire world. Above all, it involves the fate of the union.

I won't hide that the leak from the White House saying that serious consideration was being given to recognizing the independence of the Ukraine by the U.S.—especially because that leak came on the eve of the referendum—that this was taken negatively. It appears that the U.S. is not only trying to influence events, but to interfere.

Second, the majority of the republics have declared independence. That does not prevent them from participating in the formation of a new Union of Sovereign states. In fact, sovereignty gives them the freedom to participate.

Thus the referendum does not automatically mean that Ukraine has broken ranks with the Soviet Union, that this is the end of Ukraine's relationship with the Union.

We want very much that in this subtle and important question, there is no rush. I would like to recall the situation in Yugoslavia, which has led to the

current state of affairs. But, George, the current situation is even more complicated than that of Yugoslavia. If someone in Ukraine says that they are seceding from the Union, and someone says they are supporting them, then it would mean that 12 million Russians and members of other peoples become citizens of a foreign country. Crimea has already stated that if Ukraine distances itself from the Union, then Crimea will act to review the status of Crimea in Ukraine. The question of Donetsk will also emerge.

We must all act—and I hope for understanding from you on this, because it is important what position the President of the United States takes—act in a way that does not push developments in the wrong direction. Bear in mind the advice of those who want the process to develop naturally. Time is needed for that.

Here Yeltsin has forces pushing for an independent Russia, and toward a return of all Russian lands, including those now in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and others. If this process unfolds, that would be a catastrophe for Russia, Ukraine, and the rest of the world.

Thus I would recall our last talk in Madrid, where we discussed the general interest of the U.S., and Europe in the retention of a reformed, democratizing Union.

Those are the thoughts I wanted to outline to you. I just talked to Yeltsin. We will be paying close attention to the referendum in Ukraine. Possibly after the referendum I will arrange a meeting between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine. So, I urge you to be very prudent and balanced, taking steps without haste, and to cooperate.

The President: First of all, I want to cooperate. We are welcoming independence to guard against radical elements in Russia and Ukraine. I want to support the reasoned position you've outlined to work with the parties.

Mikhail, if the referendum goes as expected, what will you and Yeltsin say about independence—not recognition—but independence?

President Gorbachev: We will say what I already said, and I hope Yeltsin says. Independence strengthens the sovereignty of Ukraine, and gives the possibility for free dialogue with other republics to discuss further cooperation, including political and economic union—a political union including defense.

We cannot agree with separatists who like to use the vote for independence as a vote for secession, for breaking with the union. Every state of the U.S. is sovereign, but we deal with the United States as a strong state.

The President: Very true. The recognition of the aspirations of Ukrainians to be independent will pave the way to resolve these thorny issues standing in the way of political and economic reform.

Mikhail, believe me, I am not trying to embarrass you or Yeltsin, and I'm not trying to mingle in your internal affairs. I want to make another point once again. I do not want to inadvertently play into the hands of radicals in Russia or Ukraine.

I will closely consult with you and with the Russian Republic. Jim Baker will stay in close consultation with Eduard. We will work hand-in-hand to cooperate

on borders, nuclear weapons, and center-republic relations. I just wanted to personally discuss this with you.

President Gorbachev: Yesterday I had a meeting of the Political-Consultative Council. Yakovlev, Shevardnadze, Popov, Sobchak, Yavlinsky, Petrakov, Bakatin, and Yegor Yakovlev were there—a well-seasoned team of reform-oriented people steeled by experience.

The main question was that of political union. All of them spoke. We met from 3:00 to 9:00 at night. Everyone said that political union is vital, essential. Without it, the result could be a catastrophe for the Soviet Union, you, and for the world.

All the members of the council agreed to do all possible to speed up that process, to urge politicians to move to signing of the treaty. I tel [sic] you so that you have an idea what we discuss among ourselves, how we all think.

The President: I needn't tell you we have great respect for those names here. They are steeled by their trials, and that makes an impression on us.

President Gorbachev: George, I highly value this call, and our direct, friendly conversation. I am deeply convinced that our cooperation and interaction with the U.S. Administration—which is only possible with a renewed union—is vitally necessary. It is very important for the entire world.

The President: We are following events closely. I am always available, as is Jim Baker, any time. Now I'll try to call Yeltsin.

President Gorbachev: OK, George. I shake your hand. I and my colleagues wish you and your associates the best. Heartfelt greetings from Raisa to you and Barbara.

The President: I'm under a little pressure at home. I can't understand what you have been through, but people are piling on me, so I can understand a little of what you're experiencing. So, I wish you success.

President Gorbachev: Thanks, and goodbye.

The President: Goodbye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through FOIA 2000-0429-F by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 154: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Yeltsin, 1:08 p.m. – 1:36 p.m.

December 8, 1991

This extraordinary conversation takes place less than 10 minutes after the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus have signed a declaration dissolving the Soviet Union and announcing the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Yeltsin, sounding nervous and inebriated,²⁶ emphasizes that he could not wait to call the U.S. president, repeating twice during the call, “Mr. President, I must tell you confidentially, President Gorbachev does not know these results.” The agreement between the three leaders was not planned in advance but was drafted throughout the previous night, and the signers were concerned about the center’s reaction. In the call, Yeltsin makes it sound like he already has Nazarbayev’s support and that the Kazakh leader is on his way to join the group in Minsk. In fact, Nazarbayev was in Moscow at the time and did not intend to go to Minsk. Bush is quite astonished but also very careful in how he responds. He notes later that he felt “a little bit uncomfortable” and wrote in his diary that he was “worrying about military action.”²⁷ He was also anxious about the fate of his partner, Gorbachev, but limited himself to expressing the hope that all issues would be resolved peacefully by the participants themselves and not by outside parties.

The President: Hello, Boris, how are you, sir?

President Yeltsin: Hello, Mr. President, very fine to welcome you. Mr. President, just as we had agreed that when extraordinary events took place, we would inform each other, I inform you and you inform me. Today, a very important event took place in our country, and I wanted to inform you myself before you learned about it from the press.

The President: All right, thank you.

President Yeltsin: We got together today, Mr. President, the leaders of the three states—Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Russia. We gathered and after many lengthy discussions that lasted about two days agreed that the system in place and the Union Treaty everyone is pushing us to sign does not satisfy us. And that is why we got together and literally a few minutes ago signed a joint agreement. Mr. President, we, the leaders of the three states—Byelorussia, Ukraine and Russia—noting negotiations to the new treaty are at a standstill, have seen objective reasons that the formation of independent states has become reality. Also noting that the rather short-sighted policy of the center has brought us to economic and

²⁶ Serhii Plokhyy reports that Yeltsin “celebrated every article in the agreement” with Soviet champagne and was “not quite in a good form,” *The Last Empire*, p. 310.

²⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 555–556.

political crisis—affecting all means of production and various layers of society—we, the community of independent states of Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Russia, have signed an accord. This accord, consisting of 16 articles, is basically a creation of commonwealth or group of independent states.

Mr. President, this accord creates a so-called commonwealth of states, including an article that this is an open commonwealth, open to all states, including all the former members of the union.

The President: I see.

President Yeltsin: The members of this commonwealth have a goal for strengthening international peace and security. They also guarantee all international obligations under agreements and treaties signed by the former Union, including foreign debt. We are also for the unitary control of nuclear weapons and nonproliferation.

This accord was signed by the heads of all states involved—Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Russia.

The President: Okay.

President Yeltsin: The room from which I am calling also contains the President of Ukraine and Chairman of Supreme Soviet of Byelorussia. I also just finished speaking with President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. I read to him the full text of the accord, including all 16 articles. He is fully in accord with all of our actions and he wants to sign the accord. He is about to fly to the Minsk airport to sign it.

President Bush: I see.

President Yeltsin: This is very serious. These four states form 90% of the national product of the Soviet Union. This is an attempt, a step, to maintain a commonwealth, but to free us from the global center which had issued commands for over 70 years. This is a very serious step, and we hope, we are sure, we are certain, that this is the only way out of the critical situation we find ourselves in.

The President: Boris, are you....

President Yeltsin: Mr. President, I must tell you confidentially, President Gorbachev does not know these results. He knew that we were to meet—in fact, I told him myself we would meet. Surely we will immediately send him the text of our accord as certainly he will have to make decisions at his level. Mr. President, I was extremely, extremely frank with you today. We four states feel there is only one possible way out of this critical situation. We don't want to do anything secretly—we will give a statement immediately to the press. We are hoping for your understanding.

The President: Well, Boris, I appreciate your call and your frankness. We will look immediately at the 16 points. What do you think the center's reaction will be?

President Yeltsin: First of all, I talked with Minister of Defense Shaposhnikov. I want to read the 6th article of the agreement. As a matter of fact, Shaposhnikov fully agreed and supported our position.

I am now reading Article 6:

“The member countries of the commonwealth will cooperate for international security and peace, as well as arms control and reduction of armaments and expenditures for defense. They will aim for arms control, including complete

elimination of nuclear arms and complete disarmament under strict international controls.”

The President: Uh huh.

President Yeltsin: “They will respect each other’s attempts to create non-nuclear states/nuclear free zones and/or neutral states.”

The President: I see.

President Yeltsin: Please note well the next paragraph, Mr. President (and I urge the interpreter to translate this precisely):

“The states will keep and support united command over common military and strategic space. They will work out, develop, and codify unitary command over the military, will provide for single control of nuclear weapons, and will work out all procedural sides of this.”

Dear George, I am finished. This is extremely, extremely important. Because of the tradition between us, I couldn’t even wait ten minutes to call you.

The President: First, I am very grateful to you. Second, we will study the 16 points with great interest as soon as we receive them.

President Yeltsin: I am sending them immediately.

The President: We will owe you a reaction—we will get back to you. We are grateful for your exceptional courtesy.

President Yeltsin: I am very satisfied. This is really, really hot off the press—this is the latest information. To be frank, even Gorbachev doesn’t know, although we shall inform him right away.

The President: Thank you again for this special courtesy to the United States. We will work with you and others as this develops. Of course, we hope this whole evolution is a peaceful process.

President Yeltsin: Yes, absolutely.

The President: Please pay my respects to the other two presidents, and Nazarbayev when you see him.

President Yeltsin: Mr. President, thank you for all your understanding of our position and your support. For the situation we are in, we could not do so otherwise.

President Bush: We certainly want to study this carefully. We realize this must be sorted out by participants, not outside parties like the United States.

President Yeltsin: We guarantee this, Mr. President.

President Bush: Well, good luck, and thank you for your call. We are interested in the reaction from the center and other republics. Time will tell, I guess.

President Yeltsin: I’m sure all other republics will understand and join us very soon.

The President: Thank you again for your call after such an historic happening.

President Yeltsin: Goodbye.

The President: Goodbye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2004-1975-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 155: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Bush–Gorbachev, 3:37 p.m. – 4:11 p.m.

December 13, 1991

Amazingly, given the whirlwind of events in early December, this is the first direct conversation between Bush and Gorbachev since November 30. Both leaders are stunned by the unexpected developments unfolding around them, especially by the December 8 proclamation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (see Document No. 154), which followed the December 1 referendum in Ukraine that demonstrated strong support for independence (even in the Crimea and the Donetsk region). In response, Bush decided to send Secretary Baker to Moscow, Kiev and Alma-Ata to clarify the security situation. In this conversation, Gorbachev continues to try to explain the situation to Bush within the framework of a possible Union treaty, or a series of treaties that would retain some role for the center and his own position as president. Bush reiterates his determination not to interfere and to try not to influence events in any way. Gorbachev's profound confusion is almost palpable in the way he repeats one of his favorite words—"process"—so many times.

The President: Mikhail, this is George Bush. Can you hear me?

President Gorbachev: Good day, George. Or good evening since it is evening here.

The President: I've been thinking of you. I had a call from Boris Yeltsin today. And I asked Jim Baker to ask Shevardnadze if we should talk. I wanted to get an update from your side. I just wanted to pass along the message that we are not trying to influence events there in any way. I am thinking of you professionally and personally. I wondered what you could say to shed light on what is for us a confusing situation.

President Gorbachev: The situation has become difficult and complicated. This was unexpected for me. Perhaps it was not unexpected for others, but it was for me.

On November 25 we agreed on a draft union treaty. We signed a State Council resolution—Yeltsin and me and others. There were eight republics, except for Ukraine. We sent the draft to the Supreme Soviets of the republics for ratification. We published it for general discussion among the people and sent it to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Yeltsin participated at all stages in cooperating with me. Then he changed course radically by turning up in Minsk. For two days, I had no contact from him. The situation had changed. He made no attempt to contact me and so this was an unexpected change for me.

I had tried to get the treaty process going. I have to say that I had information on the readiness of the Supreme Soviets of the republics to approve the union treaty. A positive outcome was being prepared by the Russian parliament, but all

of a sudden Yeltsin made a change. In politics anything can happen especially when one deals with such politicians. And they say now that the process is at a dead end but I don't understand what they are talking about because everyone had agreed except for Ukraine.

Okay, so Ukraine wanted to become independent. But it had indicated it could be part of the economic and defense treaty—that is what Kravchuk indicated to me and what he is indicating now by his actions. So what is different? Ukraine could have been part of some of the union treaties.

The process is pointed in a different direction now. So what do I think of this? We are politicians. We deal with realities and have to act accordingly. The new process is continuing and has begun to justify some of my fears. And so things are not going forward smoothly. The Ukrainian Supreme Soviet has limited the rights on citizenship. On foreign policy, they are talking only about consultation, not coordination. There are also illegal aspects—there is an effort to destroy the all-union parliament with negative and illegal measures.

I have taken the following position. The situation in general is very difficult. Since the process is going on, it should proceed within the framework of the constitution. I will abide by the decisions of the republics. The Minsk statement was published in an impromptu fashion and there are many things that are not clear. The country was a whole and now could break into pieces. I want the other republics to participate in the process; otherwise it would be against the constitution. I want the concept of the commonwealth to acquire more meaning. So far my former colleagues have a dim idea of the commonwealth. Their experts are asking mine for help. My most serious comments are how will the commonwealth function and act?

Many questions are unclear, including whether the commonwealth will be a subject of international law. For us and for the U.S. this raises questions about their statement. Who will take up the obligations of the USSR on START, on CFE and on other treaties? Who will take up the obligations of the USSR on thousands of economic treaties? If the commonwealth is not a subject of international law, what will become of the Security Council seat? All this looks like the work of amateurs. I am working on the process, trying to get this out of a primitive situation.

They have refused my role. I understand this situation, even if I don't share the approach. Yesterday I gave a quick and negative statement. Today there was a positive result with the Russian and Byelorussian Supreme Soviets. Their deputies will be reinstated in the all-union Supreme Soviet. Otherwise it would be an unconstitutional act. This morning, I talked to Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kravchuk about the armed forces and what Kravchuk's unconsidered actions have led to. Yeltsin confirmed he will do nothing to undermine the unity of the armed forces. Kravchuk promised he would not violate agreements and would remain in accord with the defense agreement. His actions were not thought through and I sent two Generals to see him. The situation in general, George, on the armed forces and strategic weapons is under control. There is no danger here.

Right now I am using my role as President and as a politician to get the process moving to a constructive and legal basis. We need fast decisions in this country now. How do I see my role in the future? If the commonwealth is an amorphous organization with no mechanism for foreign policy and defense and economic interaction, then I do not see any role for myself. Now as I see the situation—and I think the commonwealth was a mistake—we must have greater coordination among the republics; otherwise we will not get out of the situation, the mudslide that we are in.

I speak with Boris Yeltsin regularly. I spoke with him two to three times today. We discuss specific political issues and I express my thoughts to him. I will meet with the Asian republics in the next few days. This is the situation here. I am doing what I can to move the process forward in a constructive vein. The situation is very tense. Society can bear no more difficulties.

How do I see the role of the U.S. and the West? In the political realm, we need to stimulate the process of making the commonwealth come alive with real institutions. There must be some kind of state council, a parliament, economic organization to agree on economic policy, a unified military command. Otherwise, there will be a negative effect on our domestic and foreign policy.

In economics, I would like to count on your direct attention to the following. We have two real dangers. First, I do not want to scare you about the situation but we need your immediate help to normalize the situation. Second, the transition to the market and to freeing prices will be very difficult and could produce a severe social reaction. You must understand our situation now, George. Only two percent of our products are bought and sold at the market. To think that the market can regulate everything tomorrow is an illusion.

So I am suggesting to the republics that they take steps to stimulate producers, farmers, traders and even state enterprises. Before making the transition to free prices, we must take steps to protect the poorest part of our population. A threat exists in the productive sector because a disruption in economic ties will lead to a decline in production in January and February. There might not be a sufficient amount of goods despite the freeing of prices. We need financial aid for more goods and aid to convert the ruble and open the country to foreign capital. If we apply this set of political and economic measures gradually, we might avert a negative reaction in the transition to free prices. These are briefly the steps we need to take and we can discuss them in more detail when Jim Baker is here.

The President: I appreciate your full explanation. Jim Baker is prepared to discuss these issues in detail. I know it is an extraordinarily difficult situation. Do not hesitate to call me if you need to. I recognize the state of flux and transition.

President Gorbachev: George, I think Jim Baker's Princeton speech should not have been made, especially the point that the USSR had ceased to exist. We must all be more careful during these times. The main thing is to avoid confrontation.

The President: Let me be clear that I want to avoid confrontation. I don't want to interfere. I accept your criticism. I do not think Jim said it quite that way—he

said only “the USSR as we have known it” would be very different. That is a constructive suggestion that I will pass to him.

President Gorbachev: I think we had a friendly conversation, at least I hope so.

The President: Absolutely.

President Gorbachev: There is journalism and there is politics and we know the difference.

The President: Thank you very, very much. My best to Raisa during the holidays ahead. I will be in close touch with Jim on the trip. I invite you to call me at any time day or night.

President Gorbachev: Thank you, George. Please give my and Raisa Maximovna’s best to you and Barbara. If necessary, I will call you. The main thing is to keep the situation from getting worse in order to maintain the things we did together for Europe and the world.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2004-1975-MR by the National Security Archive.]

Document No. 156: Record of Conversation between Gorbachev and Baker

December 16, 1991

After the reality of the USSR's disintegration became clear to U.S. policymakers, the secretary of state embarked on a trip to the four nuclear republics to see with his own eyes how the transition was being handled. His first meeting with Yeltsin and his foreign minister, Andrey Kozyrev, was not very encouraging because Kozyrev could not answer many of Baker's questions.²⁸ This transcript of the meeting with Gorbachev shows the Soviet president swaying between condemning the Minsk agreement of December 8 that established the Commonwealth of Independent States and expressing his determination to help this new structure succeed because it might be the only way to prevent total chaos and disintegration.

Gorbachev is surrounded by two of his closest advisers—Shevardnadze and Yakovlev. Although both men resigned their posts to protest the direction of policy, they returned to close ranks behind him following the coup. Gorbachev is unusually subdued and admits it is “possible that to some extent I made some miscalculations and even serious mistakes.” He is still half-hoping that one final session of the USSR Supreme Soviet might produce a call for a referendum on the Union. He clearly continues to believe that the breakup is not final, that “the people do not have the sense that the Commonwealth means the breakup of the country. People still think that we will have one country, and that all the economic, cultural, and human connections will remain.”

Baker says that he shares Gorbachev's view that the “Brest Agreement,” as he refers to the Minsk statement, is “merely a shell,” but he wants more detail about how the transition would take place. He is reassured that Gorbachev and Yeltsin seem to have a plan, and an understanding of how the command and control structure would work in the Commonwealth. Gorbachev worries that the worsening situation in the country could make people embrace a dictatorship, and that democrats will have to make undemocratic moves. He is concerned with the number of ground forces, especially in Ukraine, and the condition of ethnic Russians in the republics. Baker shares his apprehensions when speaking about the Baltic states: “right now Russians are turning into second-class citizens, and in Lithuania the Poles also.” He assures Gorbachev they will remain friends and possibly even partners. There is no mistaking the warm and trusting, if not already nostalgic, tone of this conversation, the last personal meeting Gorbachev would have as president with a high-level representative of a Western state.

Gorbachev. I welcome you as a partner and friend.

Baker. Thank you.

Gorbachev. It's good that you and the president decided to make the trip here at this time. It is in our mutual interest to make sure that the work of the recent

²⁸ Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 566–567.

years continues. There are some things that are more important than our personal interests, our careers, and even our views.

Our country is entering a period of truly fundamental changes in all spheres, and the most important thing for me is that these processes stay in the constitutional framework as much as possible, based on political decisions, rather than spilling into chaos and lawlessness.

I remain committed to my position—we have to reform our multinational but nevertheless united country. When people say that this process hit a dead end, they are wrong. The issue lies elsewhere, and you should know that.

At a meeting of the State Council on November 25th, we all agreed upon and signed a resolution to send the Union Agreement to the Supreme Soviets. I supported this, as did all the republic leaders who were present. I personally spoke with leaders of six republics, I spoke with Nazarbayev. The draft was supposed to be approved last week. My experts worked with Yeltsin's experts. The draft was reviewed in Russia's Supreme Soviet and I have their positive conclusions from this review. Nazarbayev wanted the draft to be approved on December 10th.

But we came upon a dead end because of Ukraine. The question came up—should we all stumble into this dead end, or should we continue the process and let Ukraine join in when it realizes how necessary it is.

Yeltsin asked me, how do we ensure Ukraine's participation? I told him that if Russia and other republics sign, Ukraine will catch up with the rest. It is already a member of the Economic Agreement. It could become an associate member....

Right now I don't want to go into the reasons why this happened. It is our problem, and the responsibility should lie with us. It is possible that to some extent I made some miscalculations and even serious mistakes. It is possible that you did the same. But that is not the issue right now. Right now we are dealing with realities that are important to both of us.

My role, as I see it, is to use the powers of the presidency and my political power overall to make sure that this process—the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States that is going through all the republics right now—does not lead to even greater disintegration of the country. This is a real danger.

As a man of experience, you understand that the Minsk Agreement was easy to adopt, but is useless for real life. It is too general. It's similar to the statement President Reagan and I made in Geneva that nuclear war is unacceptable and can have no winners. But the question arises: what's next?

In my view, my role is to help define this process, to develop a framework and foundation, and most importantly, to set up mechanisms to keep it alive. Right now the question of the Armed Forces is more or less—I emphasize, more or less—worked out. [This is the] question that is particularly on everyone's mind here and in the world, one that is important for our partners. Still, the rest of the issues require a lot of work. In the meantime, society is in a state of uncertainty, instability, and disintegration. There is very little time and we have to take urgent action.

Together with my longtime colleagues, who are present here, I want to help to establish the principles and institutions of the Commonwealth, to work out

procedures that would ensure continuity. I will work in this vein for as long as it is necessary and appropriate, considering my constitutional responsibility for the country, for what happens in it, and for the consequences. This should be done without getting emotional, but in the spirit of maximum responsibility.

I wish them luck, although I do not believe they can succeed. And still, I want them to succeed, because if they do not, everything we worked for and our future is at stake. But all that is philosophy, so to speak. Considering that you already spoke with two ministers and Yeltsin, I would like to hear your opinion on these conversations and discuss whatever interests you.

Baker. Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to emphasize that we did everything possible not to get drawn into the political issues that have to do with your internal affairs. This has been our policy previously and we continue to stand by it during this visit.

You, the people at this table, have for several years been our partners and—more importantly—our friends. You remain our friends and, as I told representatives of the press, maybe you will remain our partners. Whether this happens depends on the internal developments in your country. But in any case, you are our friends. And we are very saddened when we see disrespect shown towards you, including during this visit. I can honestly tell you and we are against this kind of behavior.

Last night I had a good conversation with Eduard Shevardnadze. He said the same thing that you just emphasized right now: you see your responsibility in making sure the transformation proceeds in an organized and constitutional way, because if this process is not a success, the disintegration will spread, with all the ensuing negative consequences for the Soviet people and the world.

We share your view that the Brest Agreement is merely a shell. Moreover, there have already been contradictory statements—statements that are contrary even to the provisions of this agreement.

Gorbachev. Yes, I talked about this possibility and turned out to be a prophet. The prophecy came true very quickly, I did not want that. So I had to get involved. I spoke several times with Kravchuk and Yeltsin. I think it is important to act in such a way as to prevent the aggravation of the situation.

I wanted our conversation to be in this narrow circle because we know each other well and can speak without restrictions. It's clear that the Minsk idea will need a great deal of work if Ukraine is already questioning the status of open borders, freedom of movement, residence, and employment; they are only talking about contacts based on the agreements. Instead of a coordinated foreign policy they are talking about only consultations in the sphere of foreign policy. The incomplete formula on defense is also subject to change. I cannot help but get worried when on December 12th, the day when Yeltsin was speaking in the Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine made the decision to introduce a system of vouchers, i.e. an independent currency that will circulate alongside the ruble, and Kravchuk declared himself commander in chief.

A situation could arise during the further development of the Belavezha Accords, something could happen and Ukraine could walk away. There is already a

possibility that Kravchuk will not be going to Alma-Ata. Nazarbayev called me twice over the last couple days, he is very concerned. In Ashgabat, they have a more mature understanding of the situation. It is possible that Russia will stomp its foot and say "We are tired of all this." This attitude has been around for a long time. So they will stomp their foot, but what then? The situation could become strained and decisions would be made quite differently. There are already signs of authoritarian approaches. During these difficult times we might regard that with some understanding, though Aleksandr Yakovlev probably would not agree with me on that. But you can live with authoritarianism for a while, even though the democrats are very concerned. At their two-day Congress they discussed this question: what happens to democrats when they come to power? One famous democrat, Gavriil Popov, already decided to step aside.

But I am afraid that it will not stop at authoritarianism. The situation is very difficult, and if the republics don't come to an agreement, the disintegration could be exacerbated and we could face the worst case scenario. I am talking about dictatorship. The people are so victimized that society might support dictatorship.

This is why I want the Commonwealth agreement to be successful, not to fall apart. I wanted to tell you about this in confidence because we are all thinking about it right now.

Baker. I would like to tell you the following very confidentially. At a meeting this morning it was conveyed to us that you and Yeltsin are in the process of discussing a kind of transition period from mid-December to mid-January; during this period work will be done on the implementation of the Brest Agreement. I would like to ask, if you consider it possible to discuss this with us, whether this is your understanding as well?

And the second question: what should we be doing right now, if you consider it important that the Brest Agreement is implemented? In particular, what is your opinion on how we should deal with requests for diplomatic recognition? Finally, how do you see the future of the Armed Forces in the context of the Brest Agreement?

We were told that the Commonwealth will be similar to the British Commonwealth, except for one thing—the defense component. The sphere of defense will include everything except the army, namely strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, aviation, air defense and the navy. But at the same time, each of the ten states will have its own foreign policy. If this is the case, how can there be a unified defense policy? Who will be the commander in chief?

Gorbachev. We had an agreement about this with Yeltsin. I told him, "You 'closed down' the Soviet Union and went 'on a spree,' which is essentially a coup. The Supreme Soviet has no idea what's going on, but you already briefed the president of the United States."

I told Yeltsin that my position remains the same. But if they made their choice, I have to create the constitutional preconditions for a new process. They need a consensus. If they want to look like democrats, instead of highway bandits, they have to take it into consideration.

Thus, we needed a process and I said let's think about what it will be. Considering the fact that the Asian republics still needed to develop their positions, and the fact that the Russian parliament had not expressed its views at the time, we assumed the process would take until mid-January. So there was this understanding, and in this context they were supposed to adjust some of their steps. For example, they had nearly announced that the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs was closing. We agreed that we will decide what to do with existing departments as the process develops and new Commonwealth institutions take shape. For a time things calmed down, but suddenly I find out that they are making rather important decisions behind my back.

They made a very impudent statement that the Soviet Union no longer exists. This means there is no constitution, no laws, no structures to regulate defense, the border regime, there is no role in the UN, etc. This is such an amateurish approach that our culture, especially political culture, is dying. There is already no Soviet Union, and there is not yet a Commonwealth. What do we have then?

We must ensure continuity. I remember how much you worked with Shevardnadze to develop the implementation mechanisms of our treaties, to find answers to the questions of "what, how, when?" And here they are deciding the fate of a nation based on this kind of improvisation.

Thus, the first and most important condition is that the process must happen within the constitutional framework. I think your position should aim to achieve this, because it would benefit all of us.

How to deal with [requests for] recognition? I think we should proceed calmly and without rushing. Firstly, we have to see what kind of Commonwealth will emerge, whether it will be a subject to international law. When the relationship between the Commonwealth and the world is established it will become clear what to do about recognition. Otherwise, the process may become complicated or fail, which would be disadvantageous for the Commonwealth, for the world, and for the U.S. as our partner.

Baker. I would like to note that the requests are not for the recognition of the Commonwealth. We are talking about recognition of individual states.

Gorbachev. I understand. It needs to be tied to the formation of a viable Commonwealth. Food aid would be a real support for us right now. There is a danger of the situation reaching a critical mass and simply exploding, which would sweep away all governments.

About the future of the armed forces. The armed forces would benefit from a well-defined Commonwealth. Therefore, it is important to stimulate the formation of the Commonwealth using all available channels of influence, including the question of recognition.

We have to keep in mind one thing about the Asian republics. Ukraine, or rather the current Ukrainian politicians, is not interested in their participation. These politicians are mostly interested in Russia's resources. This is a mistake, of course, and a very serious one. If these republics sense that they are being pushed aside, the process will become more difficult and they may start

thinking about alternative options. It would complicate the issue of the armed forces as well. Overall, the Asian element is playing a positive role right now. The Asian republics have taken a more civilized and European position than the European republics. However, we can assume that they have a reserve position that would involve greater integration with Muslim countries. This is a subject on which we could have a whole separate discussion. In any case, there were discussion in Ashgabat to extend the railroad construction to Beijing and Istanbul.

So, it is important not to isolate these republics, but rather to include them. They can have a healthy influence, including on the issue of the armed forces. They have a clear position—they are for united armed forces and very strict control over nuclear weapons.

Right now we hear a lot of statements about the transfer of all nuclear weapons to Russia; that Russia will assume all the debts and will be the legal successor to the Soviet Union on all the big questions. Of course, such of statements can only be made from inexperience and arrogance. I will refrain from using stronger language here.

Thus, it is necessary to have a full agreement about the Commonwealth, in order to channel all aspects of this process in the right direction. To make it clearer what will emanate into the world from this space.

Baker. We are told that the Brest Agreement will be supported at the meeting in Alma-Ata. I think the question of what is required from the constitutional point of view is essentially a political question here. But I would like to ask: if the meeting takes place and the republics support the Brest Agreement, even though it has shortcomings as we discussed, what else will be necessary to consider the process to be within the constitutional framework, in your view? I understand that we have no part in this, but I would just like to know your position.

Gorbachev. At the minimum, we would need a final session of the Supreme Soviet. After the other republics join and sign, there we need to be an exchange of ratification documents to express the official position of the CIS states. Then there should be a session of the Supreme Soviet to legally draw up the cessation of the Soviet Union's existence and the start of the Commonwealth. Moreover, by the time of this final session, it is necessary to have outlined the main contents of a defense alliance; it is necessary to have a clear plan for building and managing the armed forces, especially strategic forces. At that point, the Supreme Soviet could conclude its mission and disband. The Commonwealth of Independent States would create new agencies and institutions.

And one more thing: there has to be an agreement on foreign policy. The international community needs to know with whom they are dealing—whether it's ten states with foreign policies, or a political entity with a coherent foreign policy that would be the successor to the Soviet Union, particularly in the UN Security Council and on the major agreements concluded by the USSR.

I think it is possible, I am even sure of it, that the Supreme Soviet will support the agreement on the Commonwealth of Independent States. After all, life

requires us not to lose time. But the Supreme Soviet may not want to assume the responsibility for “shutting down” the USSR and could vote for a referendum or plebiscite, despite the current political fatigue.

I am criticized nowadays, people say that Gorbachev wants to undermine the ongoing process and that’s why he is calling for a Congress of People’s Deputies, and so on. But I understand the responsibility of this moment; I understand what kind of question we are addressing. A country is ceasing to exist. There was one country, even with contradictions, but now it begins to divide into independent states. This means that we have to divide the whole mass of the economy, human relations, and so on, and so forth. This is very serious, and only the people have the right to decide something like this. If you ask the question—are you for the Union or the Commonwealth—you will get a clear answer.

As president, I could not help but comment on this. After all, I proposed a referendum on the future of the Union. This referendum took place and the people had their say. I can’t just forget that 80 percent of the population voted in the referendum, and 75 percent of the voters were in favor of the Union.

I think that in the current tense situation, the Supreme Soviet will deem it unnecessary to hold a referendum. And that’s a good thing. Still, I keep telling my colleagues that we should protect ourselves for the future. This is an exceptionally important decision; such decisions get to be made only a few times in all of history.

Baker. What would happen if there was a referendum and a significant majority in, say, four republics voted for the Commonwealth, while the majority in the country as a whole would be in favor of the Union? Would that mean that several republics would form a Commonwealth and at the same time the Union will continue to exist in a smaller form?

Gorbachev. I think if there is a referendum, the people will vote for the Union. All polls indicate that while the politicians are in favor of “softer” forms of cooperation, the people are still for the Union. We even receive letters from people blaming us for giving up the Union too easily. Then again, it is possible that they might support the Commonwealth. Most likely, the Supreme Soviet will not deem it possible to hold a referendum, but it would be better to remove this question.

Shevardnadze. Without it, the decision would not be very constitutional. After all, there was a referendum on the Union. Just a few months ago, people were in favor of a single country. Who cancelled that?

Gorbachev. It turns out that Democrats are burying the democratic choice of the people.

Shevardnadze. In Ukraine, 70 percent voted for the Union at the time.

Baker. But in another referendum, they voted for independence.

Gorbachev. [Illegible text for one page] [...]

Gorbachev. [...] what would happen should the situation explode. Of course we will pay the highest price, but others will as well.

Baker. No, he did not raise this question.

Gorbachev. Even though we had agreed about this. This is a real necessity.

Baker. We understand that. This was offered, and particularly this issue was raised before the Europeans. But beside the stabilization fund, as we understand, there is an urgent need for medical supplies and food aid this winter, due to the severity of the situation. I mention this because I agree with you completely: the time for talks is over. There is too much talk and no action.

I know you have been having an awful time with your bureaucracy, and I want to share what is happening right now. We prepared two large shipments of medication, they are already loaded on large transport airplanes. This is the sixteenth aid delivery. Of course in itself is not too much—in the amount of \$6 million. The aid is designated for hospitals in Moscow, Minsk, and Yerevan. However, the Ambassador informed me that some agency, I think a Russian one, is refusing to allow employees of the International Red Cross into the country to monitor the distribution of aid. And one of the main difficulties in mobilizing major help from the Americans and other countries is precisely that many people think that much of the aid is stolen and does not reach the designated recipients.

Gorbachev. My position is that in all spheres—credit, finance, investment—we have to have institutions and mechanisms that would include not only our people but also representatives from the EU and the United States. All our bureaucracy right now is in the republics, in the workplace. This is what impedes land reform, corporatization, privatization.

Another thing I want to mention. The process of defining the Commonwealth may be complicated by the fact that the people do not have the sense that the Commonwealth means the breakup of the country. People still think that we will have one country, and that all the economic, cultural, and human connections will remain. For example, Nazarbayev says, “We are together after all; we will work things out together.” But in order to maintain this feeling [of unity], we have to very carefully consider the principles and mechanisms that will contribute to the preservation of real connections, and form new ones in the process of reforms and transition to a market economy. This is very important, because if people feel that the Commonwealth leads to greater disintegration, that it will not save us from the collapse of everything we have, then there will be a very terrible reaction. We will have tremendous problems!

This is my consistent position, I stand by it. I believe that we should stop the disintegration, because if the situation explodes, all our progressive models will crumble and it will discredit any course of change.

Baker. This is how it was explained to us: the Commonwealth will consist of 10 separate, completely independent states, each of which will have its own foreign policy. It is not clear yet whether there will be certain economic relations, and if yes, what will they be? Will there be joint responsibility in the field of defense and strategy? The republics will not have their own Air Force, but each will have its own army.

Gorbachev. After Minsk I talked with Boris Nikolayevich, and Nazarbayev was present. I asked him questions, and it seems those were painful minutes for

him. First of all, I asked whether the independent states would have their own ground troops. He said yes. So, after they sign the agreement in Alma-Ata, Ukraine will have an army of 470,000 people.

Shevardnadze. Larger than united Germany's army.

Gorbachev. By 100,000 people.

Baker. We will ask about this in Kiev.

Gorbachev. Of course they will say that they don't need such an army. But the distinctive feature of land armies is that they are stationed along the border. Then Russia will have to think about its ground forces, what they will be and where. Just think about it—how do you divide them, who do you relocate where? It's some kind of nightmare. So I ask them, are they are idiots or responsible politicians?

Today, 80 percent of the officers and generals in the Kiev Military District are Russian. I confirmed this with the district commander in the Ministry of Defense. Of course, the Ukrainian democrats will want to cleanse the army of so many Russians. But it will be madness. I asked them about this, but did not get any answers.

They say that Gorbachev has lost touch with reality. But I pose these questions to Yeltsin because they are important to the people. This has not been thought out. For example, the question of citizenship. Now 12–14 million Russians (*just the ethnic Russians, not to mention the so-called Russian speakers*) [sic] will find that they live in another country, abroad. Yeltsin says that this issue will be addressed through dual citizenship. But I give this example. Let's say a guy from Ukraine served in Kazakhstan, got married and settled down there. If there is common citizenship, then he will maintain all his rights and social security and so on. But if not, what will happen with his civil rights, with the whole structure of human relations? It will be destroyed.

R. Strauss (Ambassador). Mr. President, I would like to ask, how do you envision the course of events with any alternative approaches? For example, if there is a referendum or a decision by the Supreme Soviet or a group of republics. I can well imagine that on December 21st the republics will agree, but then eventually fall out. But this will take time. The question is, what will life be like in the meantime?

Gorbachev. Of course, they will convene on December 21st, but the question is what will they be signing. I think they should sign a document that would recognize the need to establish the Commonwealth on the basis of certain principles and, at the same time, the need to establish mechanisms to facilitate the transition. We need to impress this idea upon them. Because all we have right now is just mantras; nothing is developed from the political and economic points of view.

I reminded Yeltsin: you were the first to recognize the Baltic States, you signed agreements with them that ensured the protection of civil rights. And what's the result? Latvia and other republics are passing citizenship laws that essentially create a category of second-class citizens. Who are these people? Russians. This is the work of the democrats that you spent decades fighting for.

In talks with the Balts we pointed out that we have objects of strategic defense, space communications, and early warning systems on the territory of these republics. They said we will find agreements on everything. And what's happening now? They are shouting, "Russians, get out!" Same as others are shouting at Americans in some countries. They had said there would be a process, that it would take time. This is the price of mantras when you need real policy.

Baker. What you said is absolutely true. As Eduard knows, when this issue was being discussed in the U.S. government and some people would advocate increasing pressure on you regarding the Baltic states, I always used this argument. Right now Russians are turning into second-class citizens, and in Lithuania the Poles also. We remember well the statements Landsbergis made and can clearly see what is happening now.

This is precisely why we are concerned about what is happening here. We do not want this to happen again. We know what happens when disintegration comes down to the lowest common denominator. We are aware of what is happening in Checheno-Ingushetia, Transdnistria. We see what is happening in Yugoslavia. We warned against this. We understand that it could happen here, and with a lot more violence.

Gorbachev. Precisely.

Baker. That's why back in September of 1989, when we met with Eduard in Wyoming, I said: right now the most important thing for you is to reach a Union Treaty. We know how much effort you put into it.

Gorbachev. The putschists cut off this possibility the day before the signing.

This conversation has been frank and open. I want to reiterate: there is a real process and we need to engage in it, using political opportunities and influence in order to enrich it and lead to a timely conclusion. Otherwise we face a great danger. A politician has to think about the country and the people who are going through a critical time. If this choice is made, I will try to help the process to be more stable and enriched.

I wish you success in your difficult mission. I hope it will allow you to better understand the situation, and allow us, even in this difficult situation, to maintain effective cooperation. Please convey my greetings and best wishes to George Bush from all of us who know him well.

Baker. Thank you very much. I noted your words: we have to use the issue of recognition in order to facilitate the process of forming the Commonwealth.

Gorbachev. To form a full-blooded and viable Commonwealth.

Baker. I will write that down as well.

Gorbachev. Otherwise the country will perish, which would be trouble for us all.

Present were: R. Strauss, D. Ross, M. Tutwiler, E.A. Shevardnadze, A.N. Yakovlev, A.S. Chernyaev.

[Source: *The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Fond 1, Opis 1. Translated by Anna Melyakova.*]

Document No. 157: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation,
Gorbachev–Bush, 10:03 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.

December 25, 1991

Less than two hours before announcing his resignation as president of the USSR, Gorbachev places a call to Bush. This is their last conversation as the leaders of the two superpowers—now close partners rather than Cold War rivals. The warmth and appreciation they have for each other is evident, as is their pride in having accomplished so much together. Gorbachev sounds high-minded and statesmanlike as he discusses the future, asking Bush to support Yeltsin and Russia's reforms, and to help the republics achieve separation without disintegrating even further. He expresses his own determination to support Yeltsin and to remain active in political life: "I do not intend to hide in the taiga, in the woods." He also tells Bush how much he values "our cooperation together, our partnership and friendship." Bush responds with praise and affection, reminding Gorbachev of their meetings at Camp David, quipping that "the horseshoe pit where you threw that ringer is still in good shape," and inviting Gorbachev to visit again. The U.S. president would come to miss this unprecedented partnership, which helped transform the world.

The President: Hello, Mikhail.

President Gorbachev: George, my dear friend. It is good to hear your voice.

The President: I greet you on this momentous day, this historic day. I appreciate your calling me.

President Gorbachev: Let me begin by saying something pleasant to you: Merry Christmas to you, Barbara and your family. I had been thinking about when to make my statement, Tuesday or today. I finally decided to do it today, at the end of the day. So let me say first Merry Christmas and very best wishes.

Well, let me say that in about two hours I will speak on Moscow TV and will make a short statement about my decision. I have sent a letter to you, George. I hope you will receive it shortly. I said in the letter a most important thing. And I would like to reaffirm to you that I greatly value what we did working together with you, first as Vice President and then as President of the United States. I hope that all leaders of the Commonwealth and, above all, Russia understand what kind of assets we have accrued between the leaders of our two countries. I hope they understand their responsibility to preserve and expand this important source of capital.

The debate in our union on what kind of state to create took a different track from what I thought right. But let me say that I will use my political authority and role to make sure that this new commonwealth will be effective. I am pleased that already at Alma-Ata the leaders of the commonwealth worked out important nuclear and strategic agreements. I hope that in Mensk [sic] they will

take decisions on other questions to assure a mechanism of cooperation among republics.

George, let me say something to you that I regard as very important.

The President: Okay.

President Gorbachev: Of course, it is necessary to move to recognize all of these countries. But I would like you to bear in mind the importance for the future of the commonwealth that the process of disintegration and destruction does not grow worse. So, helping the process of cooperation among republics is our common duty. I would really like to emphasize this to you.

Now, about Russia—this is the second most important emphasis in our conversations. I have here on my desk a decree of the President of the USSR on my resignation. I will also resign my duties as Commander-in-Chief and will transfer authority to use the nuclear weapons to the President of the Russian Federation. So I am conducting affairs until the completion of the constitutional process. I can assure you that everything is under strict control. As soon as I announce my resignation, I will put these decrees into effect. There will be no disconnection. You can have a very quiet Christmas evening. Again, about Russia, let me say we should all do our best to support it. I will do this to support Russia. But our partners should do this too and should play a role to help and support it.

As for me, I do not intend to hide in the taiga, in the woods. I will be active politically, in political life. My main intention is to help all the processes here begun by Perestroika and New Thinking in world affairs. Your people, the press here, have been asking me about my personal relationship with you. I want you to know at this historic time that I value greatly our cooperation together, our partnership and friendship. Our roles may change but I want to assure you that what we have developed will not change. Raisa and I send to you and Barbara our very best wishes.

The President: Mikhail, let me say first how grateful I am for this call. I listened to your presentation with great interest. We will stay involved, particularly with the Russian republic whose enormous problems could get worse this winter. I am delighted you won't plan to hide in the woods and that you will be active politically. I have total confidence that will benefit the new commonwealth.

I have written you a letter to be posted today. And in it I express the conviction that what you have done will live in history and be fully appreciated by historians.

I appreciate your comments on nuclear weapons. This is of vital significance internationally and I commend you and the leaders of the republics for what has been a great process. I note with interest that the constitutional responsibilities on this issue have been passed to Boris Yeltsin. I assure you we will have good cooperation on this.

And now, Mikhail, on the personal side. I have noticed the wonderfully strong statements from you on your relationships with me and Jim Baker. I appreciate them very much since it is exactly the way I feel. You found me at Camp David with Barbara and three of our kids and grandchildren. One of our kids is in Florida and the other with family in Virginia.

The horseshoe pit where you threw that ringer is still in good shape. That reminds me that in my letter to you, I say that I hope our paths will cross soon again. You are most welcome in the U.S. Perhaps we could even meet here at Camp David when you have straightened out your affairs. Our friendship [sic] is as strong as ever and will continue to be as events unfold. There is no question about that.

I will, of course, deal with respect, and openly with the leaders of the Russian republic and the other republics. We will move forward with recognition and respect for the sovereignty that each has. We will be working with them on a wide array of issues. None will interfere with my desire to stay in touch and I welcome suggestions from you whatever your new role may be. But I do want to keep intact the friendships that Barbara and I value very, very much.

And so at this special time of year and at this historic time, We salute you and thank you for what you have done for world peace. Thank you very much.

President Gorbachev: Thank you, George. I was glad to hear all of this today. I am saying good bye and shaking your hands. You have said to me many important things and I appreciate it.

The President: All the best to you, Mikhail.

President Gorbachev: Good-bye.

[Source: George H.W. Bush Library, obtained through Mandatory Review request 2004-1975-MR by the National Security Archive.]

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The Geneva Summit 1985



President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev met for the first time on the steps of the Chateau Fleur d'Eau in Geneva, Switzerland, Nov. 19, 1985—the younger man bundled against the cold, the old movie star hatless and seemingly impervious. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C32042-10)



Reagan and Gorbachev extended their first face-to-face session inside Fleur d'Eau at Geneva from a scheduled 15 minutes to a full hour—both men had a lot to say—while aides paced outside, Nov. 19, 1985. These “one-on-one” sessions actually included translators and note takers. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C31983-14A)



After the first Geneva plenary session turned argumentative, Reagan took Gorbachev to the Fleur d'Eau boathouse where the American advance team had prepared a roaring fire to cut the chill, along with the U.S. arms control proposals translated into Russian for the Soviet leader to read, Nov 19, 1985. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C31982-11)



After the boathouse, the two leaders plunged into the second plenary session at Fleur d'Eau, here with (from left) NSC staffer Jack Matlock, national security adviser Robert McFarlane, Secretary of State George Shultz, Reagan, Chief of Staff Donald Regan, Ambassador to Moscow Arthur Hartman, and senior adviser Paul Nitze all facing the Soviet delegation at Geneva, Gorbachev at the center right, and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to his right, Nov 19, 1985. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C32148-9)



Reagan's dinner toast about working together to defend the planet if aliens were coming on Halley's Comet made quite an impression on Gorbachev, here at the Aga Khan residence, Maison de Saussure, where the Reagans were staying and hosting the dinner, Nov. 20, 1985. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C32157-3A)



After dinner at Maison de Saussure, Reagan and Gorbachev debated the language of a joint statement (Reagan had vetoed preparing a draft beforehand) while anxious aides surrounded them—at far left, national security adviser Robert McFarlane, at far right Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, at upper right Deputy Foreign Minister Giorgi Kornienko, and directly behind Gorbachev White House Chief of Staff Regan, Nov. 20, 1985. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C32157-19A)

The Reykjavik Summit 1986



Reagan and Gorbachev opened the summit with a meet-and-greet session (including photographers) inside Hofdi House, with the bay and volcanic hills visible in the distance, Oct. 11, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37406-14)



More difficult discussions ensued across a table upstairs at Hofdi House, with note taker Jack Matlock at far right behind U.S. interpreter Dimitry Zarechnak, who is facing Soviet interpreter Nikolai Uspensky, Oct. 11, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37408-16A)



U.S. senior arms control adviser Paul Nitze clutched his head at Reykjavik, and Regan, Shultz, Poindexter and Adelman looked on, while Reagan discussed again how he wanted to share his Strategic Defense Initiative with the Soviets. But Gorbachev refused to believe the offer, Oct. 12, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37419-19)



On the Soviet side of Hofdi House, Gorbachev's senior aides were not clutching their heads, perhaps feeling their boss had the initiative—here Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev (left) and foreign policy adviser Anatoly Chernyaev (right) look at documents while Ambassador Dobrynin smiles for the camera, Oct. 12, 1986. (Credit: Anatoly Chernyaev personal collection)



The second-day afternoon session at Reykjavik took a break at 4:30 p.m. and re-convened an hour later, here with President Reagan arriving all smiles at Hofdi House to begin the most intense discussions of the summit, Oct. 12, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37425-13)



In this final session of Reykjavik (from left), Gorbachev, Palazhchenko, Shevardnadze, Zarechnak, Shultz and Uspensky (back to camera) heard Reagan comment “it would be fine with [me] if we eliminated all nuclear weapons”—to which Gorbachev replied “we can do that” and Shultz said “Let’s do it”—only to have the discussion implode over limits on SDI. Behind Shultz are visible the shoes of U.S. notetaker Thomas Simons Jr. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37429-7)



Faced with a stubborn Gorbachev, the equally dogged Reagan continued to importune the Soviet leader to make a deal, as a “personal favor,” even after standing up and putting on his coat to end the last session at Reykjavik. (He was eager to get home to Nancy, and the discussions had already gone much longer than planned.) Between the two leaders is Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and (partially obscured) interpreter Zarechnak, Oct. 12, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37428-10)



Their faces spoke volumes about the failure to strike a deal on nuclear abolition and sharing SDI, as Reagan and Gorbachev walked out of Hofdi House at Reykjavik with Soviet interpreter Pavel Palazhchenko doing his best to keep them talking, Oct. 12, 1986. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C37428-18)

The Washington Summit 1987



This unusual formal portrait of Gorbachev and Reagan showed the two leaders inside the White House Library at the beginning of the Washington summit, Dec. 8, 1987. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C44007-9)



The first substantive discussion of the Washington summit took place in the Oval Office in front of the fireplace, but Gorbachev's posture suggested he was hearing once again one of the American's oft-repeated lines, perhaps about SDI as an insurance policy after nuclear weapons are gone, Dec. 8, 1987. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C44051-12)



The morning plenary session on the second day of the Washington summit included key aides on both sides, in the Oval Office. Clockwise from Gorbachev are Shevardnadze, Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev, Dobrynin, Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker, national security adviser Colin Powell, Vice President George H.W. Bush, Shultz, and interpreter Zarechnak, Dec. 9, 1987. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C44168-25)



The White House state dinner during the Washington summit featured pianist Van Cliburn, winner of a prestigious Moscow competition decades earlier, but the Reagans and Gorbachevs never looked happier than on their way together into the Soviet Embassy dinner the next night, Dec. 9, 1987. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C44198-14)



Then-Vice President Bush had gone to the Soviet Embassy on Dec. 10, 1987, to have breakfast with Gorbachev, and on their way back to the White House the Soviet leader halted his ZiL limousine on one of Washington's busiest intersections, Connecticut Avenue and L Street, Northwest, to shake hands and greet the crowds, captured in this view from Duke Zeibert's upstairs restaurant. (Credit: Jim Mauro Personal Collection)

The Moscow Summit 1988



Inside the Grand Kremlin Palace, the world's leading anti-Communist settled down with the Soviet general secretary for a photo opportunity at the beginning of the Moscow summit, May 29, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C47249-22)



Throwing both U.S. and Soviet security staff into turmoil, the Reagans emerged from their limousine to greet Russians on the famous Arbat Street on the first day of the Moscow summit, May 29, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C47276-4A)



Reagan especially impressed the Soviet public with his remarks to this Moscow State University (MGU) audience (directly in front of a statue of Lenin), quoting from Russian literature and affably replying to questions. This book's co-author, then a senior at MGU, is in the front row wearing pink, May 31, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library)



The most remarkable moments of the Moscow summit occurred when Gorbachev took Reagan for a stroll through the Kremlin and Red Square, here introducing a Soviet toddler to “grandfather Reagan.” Soon after, Reagan recanted his “evil empire” criticism from 1983, saying “that was another time, another era.” May 31, 1988 (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C47339-33)



This iconic photo placed Reagan and Gorbachev in the heart of Red Square, in front of St. Basil's Cathedral, with interpreter Pavel Palazhchenko leaning in to translate. Just out of the picture to the right is U.S. Navy lieutenant commander Woody Lee carrying the "football" briefcase with U.S. nuclear launch codes for war plans, in which Red Square was ground zero. June 1, 1988 (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C47345-10)

The Governors Island Summit 1988



Reagan greeted Gorbachev for their last summit meeting, at the Coast Guard base on Governors Island in New York harbor, just after Gorbachev's historic speech to the United Nations. The interpreters, Dimitry Zarechnak (left) and Pavel Palazhchenko (right), framed the scene, Dec. 7, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50822-10)



With overcoats off in the late afternoon sun, Gorbachev posed for photos with Reagan and Vice President (and President-elect) George H. W. Bush on the front steps of the commandant's quarters at Governors Island, New York, Dec. 7, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50841-8)



Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush began their Governors Island conversation inside the commandant's quarters with a full complement of TV cameras and news reporters straining to hear every word, Dec. 7, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50824-4)



The luncheon during the Governors Island summit included toasts and reminiscences by Reagan especially, while Gorbachev attempted (but mostly failed) to engage incoming President George Bush, and described the earthquake in Soviet Armenia that had just happened (and would cut short his New York stay). From left, White House staff chief Kenneth Duberstein, Bush, Reagan, Shultz, national security adviser Colin Powell, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, Ambassador Yuri Dubinin (obsured), Shevardnadze, Gorbachev, Yakovlev, and Chernyaev (with Dobrynin's hand visible holding a glass). Dec. 7, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50825-5 (1))



Bush, Reagan and Gorbachev all smiled as the assembled media scrum on Governors Island scrambled for photographs with the skyline of New York City in the background, Dec. 7, 1988.

(Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50828-5A)



After press requests, Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush turned to face the city skyline, putting the Statue of Liberty over their shoulders, here with Pavel Palazhchenko (off-camera) contributing translations of what Reagan said, Dec. 7, 1988. (Credit: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, C50846-27)

The Malta Summit 1989



This aerial view of Marsaxlokk harbor, southeast of Valletta on Malta, showed the original plan for the first Bush-Gorbachev summit, with the two leaders shuttling back and forth between the Soviet missile cruiser *Slava* (left) and the U.S. Navy cruiser *Belknap* (right). But winter storms forced all sessions to the Soviet passenger ship *Maxim Gorky*, tied to the dock (center top). Dec. 1, 1989. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P0874-15A)



Before the storms began, the American delegation prepared, here in the officers' wardroom of the USS *Belknap*, already decorated with U.S. and Soviet flags on the tables. Facing the camera from left are Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Secretary of State James Baker, President Bush and national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, Dec. 1, 1989. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P08478-13)



Onboard the *Maxim Gorky*, Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush shook hands to begin the first plenary session of the Malta summit, Dec. 2, 1989. To the far left is Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze; to the right is Secretary of State Baker. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P08481-18)



Lunch on the *Maxim Gorky* was apparently a buffet, with staff first to the food while the leaders continued to talk. From left, Gorbachev, Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev, and top Gorbachev military aide Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev sat across from Scowcroft and President Bush. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P08488-18)



Accommodations on the Soviet luxury liner surpassed those on the U.S. Navy cruiser, the Americans admitted—including comfortable couches, Dec. 2, 1989. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, PO8489-06)



President Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev summed up the Malta summit at their final press conference on board the *Maxim Gorky* on Dec. 3, 1989. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, PO8509-22)

The Washington and Camp David Summit 1990



The Washington summit arrival on May 31, 1990, featured high ceremony on the White House lawn, here with formal greetings from President Bush for Mikhail Gorbachev, now president of the USSR. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13298-18)



Inside the White House, in the private residence, First Lady Barbara Bush hosted a coffee for Raisa Gorbacheva on the first day of the summit, May 31, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13290-17)



The chandeliers in the East Room of the White House cast golden tones over the state dinner honoring the Gorbachevs on May 31, 1990. President Bush sat just to the right of the fireplace, talking through an interpreter to Raisa Gorbacheva, while the table to the left of the fireplace included Gorbachev with Barbara Bush and actor Morgan Freeman. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13341-21)

Gorbachev pulled Bush aside during the summit—here in the Red Room at the White House on June 1, 1990—to make a personal plea for the trade deal the Americans had stalled over the issue of Soviet pressure on the Baltic states against their declared independence. Bush ultimately agreed to sign the deal, with some caveats. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13378-06)



Gorbachev had never been to Camp David, the American president's official dacha, so Bush made a point of moving the summit there via helicopter, and then scrambling through the woods with interpreter Palazhchenko, Gorbachev and a coterie of security agents, June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13410-16)



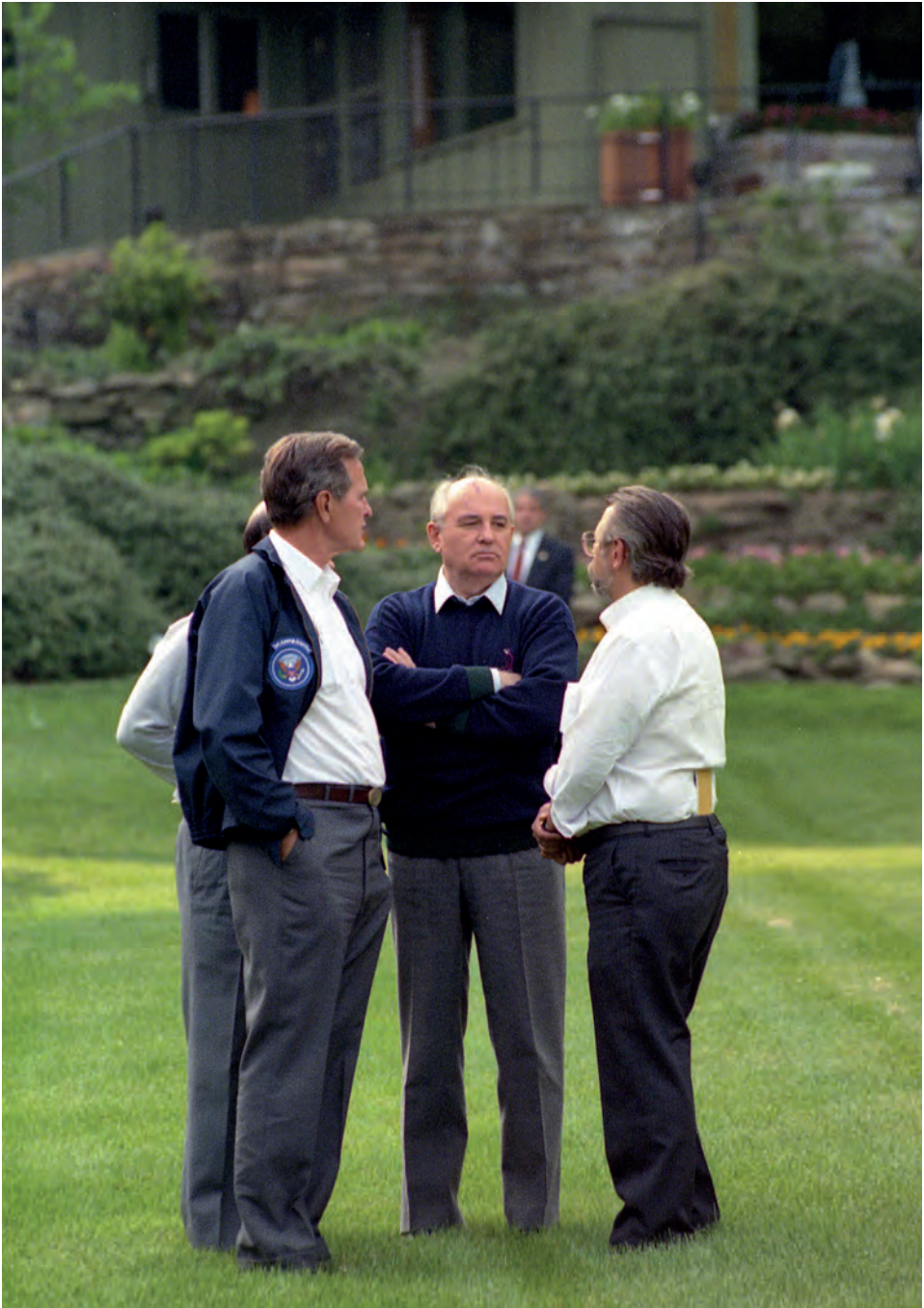
The American president also gave golf cart driving lessons to Gorbachev, here with Pavel Palazhchenko in the back seat and some anxiety on the faces, June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13410-26)



The working sessions at Camp David met on the deck, outdoors, here clockwise from top left, interpreter Peter Afanassenko, Baker, Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle (the only one in a tie), Scowcroft, Shevardnadze, Gorbachev and Akhromeyev (back to camera), June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13412-08)



The principals gathered for a group photo at Camp David, all smiles except for the Soviet marshal at right. From left, Baker, Barbara Bush, President Bush, Raisa Gorbacheva, President Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, Scowcroft, Akhromeyev. June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13437-14)



The most difficult moment of the Camp David discussions came when Bush, with only interpreters Afanasenko (right) and Palazhchenko present, delivered the American *démarche* about Soviet biological weapons, arguing that either Gorbachev was witting or he was being lied to. The Bush Library caption: "Presidents Bush and Gorbachev discuss a particularly sensitive issue in private at Camp David." (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13413-25)



The Gorbachevs were known for always taking long walks together at the end of the day, discussing everything that had come up, and Camp David's sidewalks and trees framed this characteristic scene, June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13435-04)



Bush presented Gorbachev with this plaque holding the horseshoe Gorbachev had landed as a ringer on his first try at Camp David, June 2, 1990. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P13411-15)

The Helsinki Summit 1990



The one-day Helsinki summit on Sep. 9, 1990, organized at President Bush's initiative and located at the Finnish Presidential Palace for Gorbachev's convenience, focused on achieving a joint U.S.-USSR statement on the Gulf crisis. Here, senior Bush aides reviewed drafts; clockwise from Bush are Baker, White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, Dennis Ross, Condoleezza Rice, and Scowcroft. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P15615-02)



Presidents Bush and Gorbachev announced their joint statement at a concluding press conference in the Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, Finland, Sep. 9, 1990. The statement committed to showing "aggression cannot and will not pay," and to working together to solve the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict—a major change in U.S. policy that would lead to the 1991 Middle East peace conference. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P15623-25A)

The Paris CSCE Summit 1990



Presidents Gorbachev and Bush met again in Paris on Nov. 19, 1990 at the summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), where the parties signed the treaty cutting conventional forces and pledged non-aggression. The CSCE group photo included Bush (front row left, with Kohl behind him), Mitterrand (center) and Gorbachev (front row right, next to Vaclav Havel, in front of Thatcher). (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P17572-22A)



Bush and Baker represented the U.S. at the CSCE summit, Nov. 19, 1990. Gorbachev had hoped the CSCE would replace both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but the Americans insisted on NATO as their primary structure for Europe's future. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P17559-02A)

The Moscow Summit 1991



Just before the last superpower summit in Moscow in July 1991, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev met at the G-7 session in London, where Gorbachev expected significant financial aid but went away empty-handed. Here at Lancaster House, July 17, 1991, front row from left, are: Bush, Gorbachev, John Major (U.K.), Mitterrand, and Kohl. Back row from left: Jacques Delors (European Community), Giulio Andreotti (Italy), Brian Mulroney (Canada), Toshiki Kaifu (Japan), and Ruud Lubbers (Holland). (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23789-26)



The Moscow summit began with the welcoming ceremony in St. Catherine's Hall in the Kremlin, where Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev greeted George and Barbara Bush with flowers, July 30, 1991. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23959-11)



During the first day of the Moscow summit, in the afternoon, Gorbachev walked Bush through the Kremlin and out to Red Square—here in a Kremlin hallway with interpreters Palazhchenko (left) and Zarechnak (center), July 30, 1991. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23959-18)



Gorbachev provided the tour guide commentary for Bush on the cobblestones of Red Square on July 30, 1991, with St. Basil's Cathedral behind them, the Kremlin walls to the right, and interpreters Zarechnak (center) and Palazhchenko (right). (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23976-07)



This photograph captured a moment of high drama at the beginning of the state dinner in the Hall of Facets at the Kremlin on July 30, 1991. Late arrival Boris Yeltsin (far right) attempted to take Barbara Bush's arm to escort her in to dinner, but Raisa Gorbacheva (in the green dress) intervened and stayed between the two as they moved to the tables. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P24003-19)



The great achievement of the Moscow summit was the signing of the long-negotiated START Treaty, dramatically reducing nuclear weapons (back to the levels both sides had in 1981). At Gorbachev's state dacha at Novo Ogarevo, Baker and new Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh observed Bush and Gorbachev signing the initial documents, July 31, 1991. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23934-03)



Presidents Gorbachev and Bush chatted in their shirtsleeves on the porch at the Novo Ogarevo dacha after signing the START Treaty papers on July 31, 1991—just three weeks before the August 1991 coup. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P23934-30A)

Epilogue: The August Coup and the Final Meeting, Madrid 1991



The final Bush-Gorbachev meeting took place in Madrid in October 1991, at the jointly-sponsored Middle East peace conference, which Gorbachev had persuaded Bush to accept back at the Helsinki summit of 1990 as a quid pro quo for Soviet support against Saddam Hussein. Their joint press conference in Madrid, Oct. 29, 1991, was the last public expression of the superpower partnership. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P25956-29)



Success in diplomacy abroad, such as this handshake at the Madrid conference on Oct. 30, 1991, was Gorbachev's last card to play in trying to keep the Soviet Union together after the August 1991 coup and Yeltsin's ascension. (Credit: George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, P25967-14)

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